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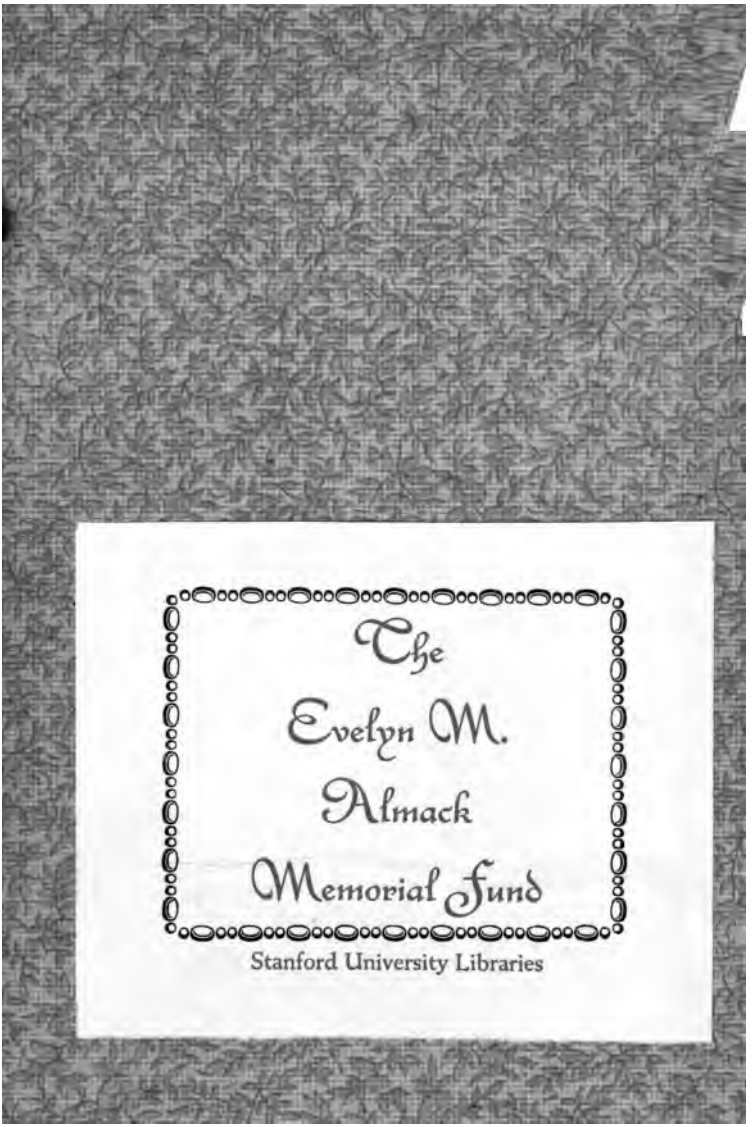
# THE WRECKERS

A SOCIAL STUDY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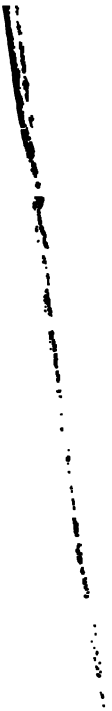

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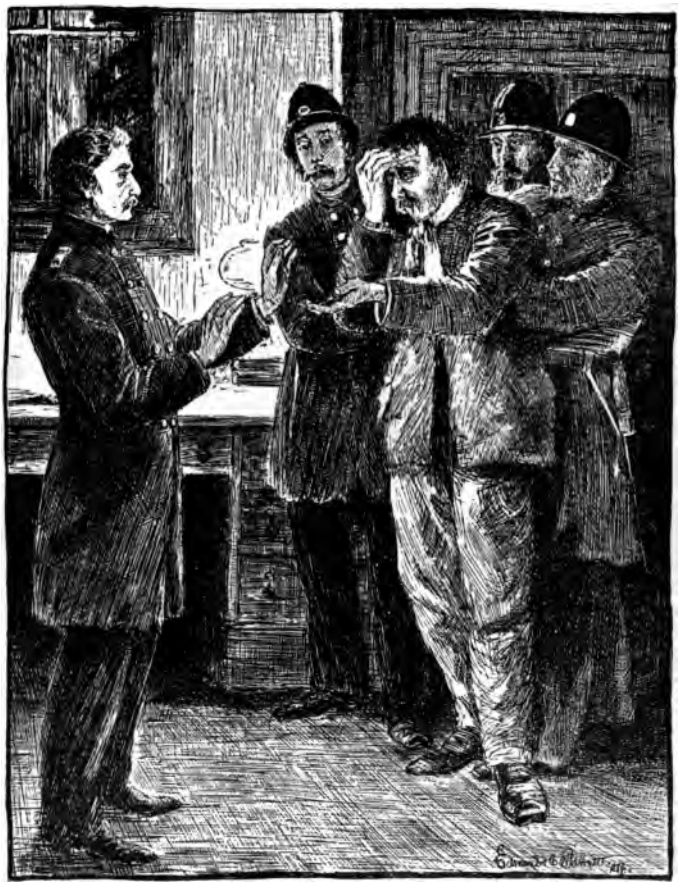

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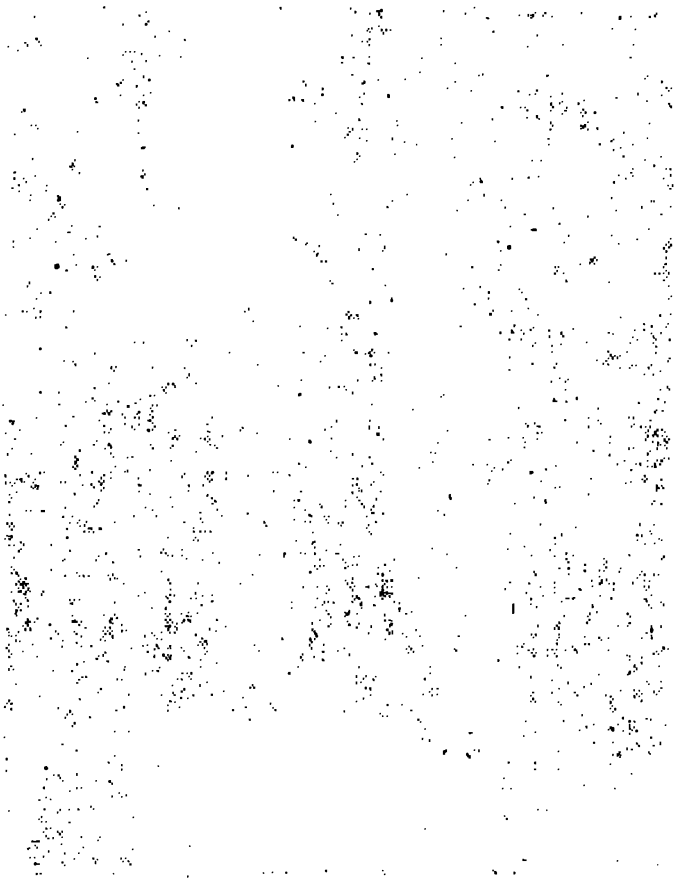

# THE WRECKERS.

## A SOCIAL STUDY.

BY

GEO. THOS. DOWLING.

*FOURTH EDITION.*

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J. B. LIPPINCOTT
STEREOTYPERS AND PRINTERS
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TO

MY MOTHER,

WHO TAUGHT ME TO REVERENCE WHAT IS PURE, TO ENJOY
WHAT IS MERRY, AND TO HATE WHAT
IS UNREAL,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

# FOREWORD.

THIS book deals with the lowly, but not the low. It is avowedly a novel with a purpose, though that purpose is not stated. If I have been able to perform the work of an artist, such a statement will not be needed; if only the work of an artisan, it would not be heeded. In dealing with some of the social problems of the day it does not, of course, pretend to be exhaustive; only suggestive.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* once said, "No man can tell beforehand how his neighbor will take a jest." And from frequent observation I believe that this is true. Not very long ago a young lady was telling of her visit to the battle-field of Waterloo. "I saw the well," she said, "into which, after the battle, they threw some of the wounded soldiers."

"Did they kick the bucket?" I asked.

"Oh, no," she answered. "There wasn't any bucket there. They died."

And yet, however my story may be received by the public, the recreation of writing it has been to me an unspeakable blessing. While it has an earnest aim and is addressed, not to the trifler, but to earnest people, nevertheless even Dr. Lyman Beecher was accustomed sometimes, as he said, "to let natur' caper." If the merriment should occasionally seem a little boisterous, I have no

excuse to offer. It is at least innocent and pure; and more than once an hour's diversion over the blunders of poor, good-natured Hans, or the ridiculous adventures of the Home Guard, has helped me to bear with a cheerful heart the pressing burdens of a very busy life.

On the other hand, Katie and Mike have become to me living friends; and often have I risen from my communion with them stronger to fight life's battle, and, I am sure, a better man. And now I leave my book with a good-natured public. I have tried to do honest work and to be real. Whatever defects there may be (and I know there must be very many), I can conscientiously say, as did grim old Thomas Carlyle under similar circumstances, "It may be poor enough stuff, but it was the best there was in me."

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# THE WRECKERS.

## CHAPTER I.

### IN WHICH THE WIND WHISTLES UP THE CHIMNEY AND THE FIRE DIES DOWN ON THE HEARTH.

A WINTER'S night, and snow everywhere! Not as we have seen it on some quiet moonlit evening, covering the earth like a wedding-robe, while white banners hung from all the trees, and every door-sill and window was decked with satin, as for a royal marriage-festival; but a winter's night such as only they remember who, homeless and hungering, have crouched in some portal on the windward side of the street, whilst you and I, reader, and those we loved, have gathered about the roaring grate, and shivered as we heard the wind moaning like some dead man's soul lost out in the darkness.

Snow everywhere! gathering in momentary drifts, only to be caught again and hurled rattling against the window-panes, or sweeping up to the house-tops or down the city streets. In vain the solitary traveller, physician perhaps, or clergyman, on some errand of mercy, tries to pull his heavy cloak about him and make headway in the face of the storm; a thousand unseen sprites pull the folds

from his numbed fingers, and, flapping them behind him like snapping whips, rush past him with shriek of weird laughter, dying away, at last, into a minor moan.

It was still early in the evening. Most of the shopkeepers along the deserted street, concluding that no customers would venture out at such a time, had hastily secured the shutters in their place, bolted their doors, and retired to the living-rooms at the rear, where, as they heard the blinds rattling in their fastenings, they inwardly congratulated themselves that, after all, there was no place like home. Here and there an occasional gleam from the screened windows, and the boisterous songs from within, made needless the sign-board creaking above the door. Even these places, however, were more or less deserted, and the red light over the entrance flickered and sputtered in the passing gusts, as though protesting against the cruelty of its lonely watch on such a night as this.

"The Lord ha' marcy on the poor this night!"

The words were uttered in the Irish brogue, and in an undertone to himself, as Michael Barney, for ten years a resident and for six years a naturalized citizen and Democratic voter of the United States, knocked the snow from his red, shaggy beard, shaking his head meanwhile, and then tightly folding his arms, like a seaman in a squall taking in all sail, bent his body to receive another blast. His, however, was not a craft which was likely to be wrecked in any ordinary storm. Six feet two inches high in his stockings, with calloused hands and iron sinews, having never known a sick day in his life (except when he was laid up for a month with a broken arm, received while stopping a horse running away in the street with

two little children, whose lives he saved), a large, homely mouth, high cheek-bones, and bronzed face,—even the sprites of the storm seemed to hesitate before trying to play their wicked pranks on him.

Has the reader ever sailed into Queenstown harbor and noticed the welcome mingling of rock and verdure and sunshine,—Faith, Hope, and Charity, done in stuff? That was Mike's face. One did not have to know him long before finding him, like those bluffs, a great green giant, lit with sunlight. Unsuspecting and easily imposed upon, the affairs of this life sometimes seemed strangely mixed to him; for his practical insight, like his pantaloons, was always just a little too short. For some years after landing in America he had worked at hap-hazard jobs, until he finally received a position as coachman for an old gentleman in New York. His employer, a man with an eye ever open for the heathen at his own door, had taken enough interest in him to teach him the accumulative value of small savings: so that in course of years he had become a capitalist on a modest scale, and was at this time an independent merchant to the extent of one humble but thriving corner grocery in the little city of Jenkinstown, not far from our great metropolis.

He was considerably later than usual to-night on his way home; for during the afternoon a messenger had brought a letter to him, written in a cramped hand and signed with the name of one of his former customers, Hans Volgate, who had recently removed to the other end of the town, more than a mile away. The letter stated that he was very sick and about to die, and desired exceedingly to see his old friend once more. It

was a long walk on such a night, and all the longer because it led directly away from home.

"But it's not Mike Barney that's afeard o' ye, ould Aurore Borealis," he had said, while buttoning up his great-coat, which, though once black, was now in the sere and yellow leaf of a great-coat's autumn-time. "It's not Mike Barney that's afeard o' ye, ould Aurore Borealis; I've faced worse winds nor ye before, an' I'll face 'em again,—bad luck to ye." And he gave his slouch hat, which, in respect to decay, was the twin to his coat, another jerk to fasten it tight down over his ears.

Patiently he had plodded his way through the snow and sleet until he had reached the door of Hans Volgate. Very quietly he had rapped against it, lest he should disturb the dying man. As no one appeared, however, his knocking had gradually become louder, until finally the door was suddenly thrown open while he was in the very act of performing on the panel a muscular protest against being kept any longer out in the cold. Surprised as he had been on not being admitted when he had been so urgently sent for, and when, therefore, it might have been supposed that they were looking momentarily for his coming, he was now still more surprised on being admitted. Who should he see standing before him, his long pipe in his mouth, his ruddy face lit up by the lamp which he held in his hand, but the very same round little German he had come to visit on his dying bed: a man, all in all, with whom health and contentment seemed not merely to be on speaking terms, but in relations of heartiest intimacy.

So startled was he at the apparition that he did not move, but, with mouth partly open and arm still ele-

vated, as it had been when recording the before-mentioned protest, it was several seconds before he was able to ejaculate, in slow, measured syllables,—

"Begorra!"

The draught swept through the open door-way, extinguishing the lamp and sending the fine snow scurrying along the floor. Hans failed to recognize him in the sudden darkness, and so, taking his pipe from his mouth, exclaimed with an impatient voice, as he felt the wind playing hide-and-seek up his flapping pantaloons and over his bald head,—

"Vell! Vat you vants here? Vy don't you come in?"

Mike, wondering much, said nothing, but mechanically stepped inside, and, after stamping the snow from his boots and taking off his coat and hat, followed the German into the little sitting-room at the rear of the hall.

"Vy, Michael, mine old friend! How you vas?" exclaimed Hans, setting down the lamp, and running, or, rather, wabbling toward him with little, short steps, and holding out two little, short, fat hands,—"Gracious Heavens! vat vas bring you here on such a night like dis, by chiminey?"

"Well, I begin to belave it was the legs of a donkey," he answered, edging round on one corner of his chair, and scratching his head, after having permitted his hand to be shaken. His friend evidently waiting for some further developments, he continued, his mind reverting to the fatal disease which carried off his former master,—

"How's yer kidneys?"

The look of wonderment increased in the eye of Hans.

"Mine kidneys? Mine kidneys is all right."

"How's yer liver?"

"Mine liver? Oh, mine gracious! Mine liver is all right too."

"Put out yer tongue," still remembering his lamented master and the doctor.

Hans was now more puzzled than ever. Scanning his visitor with a look partly amused and partly suspicious, as though hesitating to decide whether he was playing a game or had suddenly gone stark mad, he exclaimed,—

"Pull out mine tongue, by chiminey! Vat for I vants to pull out mine tongue for, hey? Oh, sthop such nonsense like doz. Sit up to der fire, und haf a glass uf beer. You don't been here before so soon for good vhile, mine friend."

Mike, with the solemn manner of one inwardly struggling with some great problem, slowly moved his chair nearer the hearth. Then he felt in his pocket and brought out a letter. "What do ye mane by writin' me such a letter as that?" he asked, with an injured tone.

Hans scanned it carefully, and with enlarging eyes. When he reached the signature he read that two or three times. Then setting down his empty glass so hard as to make the other glasses ring, he exclaimed,—

"Michael, mine friend, I never wrote such a letter like dis before."

"Faith, thin, it's a moighty bad beginnin' yer makin' in yer ould age," said the other.

"But I didn't begin in mine old age. I vas told you dat shust now. I never did write such a letter like dis

before; never in mine life." Then, as a happy thought seized him, "I can prove it too, pretty quick, right avay."

He took a pencil from his pocket and wrote his signature. Then he copied some of the sentences from the letter. There was no mistake; the chirography was altogether of a different hand.

"Well, I wonder who wrote it, so I do," murmured Mike, thoroughly convinced, but no less puzzled. "What could he want to be trottin' me way up here for, frazin' me ears an' me nose, an' you sittin' as well an' hearty as any potate in ould County Kerry? Bad luck take him, whoever he is!"

Mike found it a little difficult to forgive Hans immediately for not being in a dying condition. It did seem at least that he ought to have had a jumping toothache, if for no other reason than to make matters in this world appear less mixed. But to see him there "well an' hearty," a round little reminder that he had been duped! It was several minutes before he could feel on any pleasant terms with him. Mike was not the only one who had had these experiences of vicarious vengeance. Yesterday, from my window, I saw an American woman, whom the landlord had just been berating because she had not paid her rent, box her child's ears the moment he had gone. Of course she meant it for the landlord, but the child was handy.

He was not one to hold a grudge for long, however, and so finally, with the best of feeling on both sides, with many earnest entreaties from Hans that he should warm up with some beer, all of which entreaties, however, were steadily refused, he had departed; and here we find him, almost home, piqued and perplexed, but meditating upon what

a sad thing it would have been, after all, if his friend really had been cold and hungry and sick as the letter had stated; and thus murmuring to himself,—

"The Lord ha' marcy on the poor this night!"

Before long he came to a turn in the road not far from his own home. A dwelling stood on the corner, about twenty feet back from either street. It was a low cottage, or, rather, cabin, which a good many years ago had evidently once resolved to brush itself up and be decent; but having long since become satisfied with a "past experience," it was now as earthly as any of its neighbors, and from a bright moral-colored brown had degenerated into a sooty gray. A storm, however, is frequently a great purifier, whether of man or mansion, and the little snow-covered cabin to-night was to all appearances thoroughly reformed. The red blaze from the fire shining out through the windows, the lamp on the table and the children gathered about it, all of which Mike could see as he walked up from the gate, drove away further questionings concerning the mysteries of this life, and filled him only with that pure, quiet joy which most of us have experienced when the day's work was over, and, plodding through the night and the tempest, we have suddenly caught the gleam of a baby face mingling with the fire-light of our own home.

"I'll step in an' see if the widee wants anything, an' thin I'll go home," he thought.

He did not need to knock more than once. Quickly the door was thrown open, and six stout little Irish hands were tugging at his fingers or his coat; six stout little Irish legs were climbing on his lap, and three stout little Irish voices were giving him such a welcome as

might have made the Emperor of all the Russias choke with envy.

"Och, get off o' me, ye spalpeens!" he exclaimed, poking his fingers good-naturedly into the ribs of one, as if by way of warning to all. "Don't ye see it's frozen I am intirely? Whist now!"

They understood it well, however; his protests were only the flaunting of the red rag, inviting the conflict. At it they went in good earnest, tumbling off the chair, over on the floor, as we have seen a big bear playing with cubs. Even the fire in the grate seemed to burn brighter with joy and to leap in sympathy. The woman whom he had accosted when he first came in had continued at her work, after exchanging simply a word of recognition, cleaning off the table in a slow, methodical manner, glancing occasionally at the bear and cubs as one who had become accustomed to their antics, and yet could scarcely approve of such conduct in a serious world like this. "It's a cowld night, Mrs. Carey," said he at last, gathering the three cubs into his arms, and sitting up once more near the fire.

Mrs. Carey answered that it was a cold night, poked up the grate, which needed no poking at all, and threw on another stick of wood, which was utterly superfluous.

She and her husband had emigrated from Kenmare several years later than Mr. and Mrs. Barney, and had been near neighbors to them in the old country. Drifting towards Jenkinstown, Mr. Carey had found an opportunity for steady work on a railroad then in process of construction, and had thus become a regular inhabitant of the place. There was little in common between

him and Mike, except that they had hailed from the same village, and every traveller knows that that is a good deal. No special intimacy had existed between the families until Pat Carey was accidentally killed by falling from a bridge. It was said that he had been drinking, which was not at all improbable. The helplessness of his family had drawn out Mike's sympathy for them, and this had led him often to run in on his way home of a stormy night, either to cut some wood and bring it into the house, or perform whatever chores a woman could not very well do. He was no less a welcome visitor from the fact that many a little package brought by the boy from the store arrived as a sort of John the Baptist, to proclaim his coming.

"An' how are ye gettin' on these times, Mrs. Carey?"

"Oh, purty bad, purty bad," she answered, with the air of a woman who, having lost the romance and hopefulness of youth, now had naught but her conscience to help her forward. The breezes of life had all died out of her sails, and she could only pull wearily at the oar in a dead calm.

"Ah, but don't ye remember Father O'Flynn tellin' us last Sunday fortnight that the way to be happy is to think o' what we have, instead o' what we haven't? What would ye take, now, for this schwate little bundle o' bread an' butter an' molasses?" he added, digging his fingers once more into the ribs of the youngest of the trio, whose personal appearance showed that Mike, in his description, was a disciple rather of the realistic school than of the romantic. Then he broke into singing, tapping with his hand on Biddy's back, and beating time against the floor with his toe,—

"Then don't be sorrowful, darlin',
Oh, don't be sorrowful, pray;
For takin' the year all through, me dear,
There isn't more night than day."

Tossing the baby again,—

"Stop yer crowin', ye young rooster; I'll chuck ye into the fire, so I will. Here he goes! Och, yer pullin' out me beard loike a garden o' wades!"

Widow Carey only drew a sigh, and went on removing the dishes. Presently she stopped, and, turning suddenly toward him, cried, "Oh, the unmindful crater that I am! Have ye had yer supper, Moike?"

"Niver moind about me supper. I'll have that in good toime, whin I sit down wid me own Maggie forninst me across the table, an' me little Katie on me knee."

Mrs. Carey drew another sigh, and worked away at the oar. "It's a long toime since we was childer together in the ould country, Moike," she said at last. "There's bin great changes since thin."

It seemed to introduce a new train of thinking. "Yes," he answered, "great changes since thin."

As though partly divining his thoughts, she said,—

"How's Maggie?"

"Purty well; purty well, poor darlin'. Though she don't seem as happy as she did whin I first knew her in Kenmare." Then there was a long pause; Mike looked into the fire as though he were looking a long way beyond. Biddy put out her fingers to pull again at his whiskers.

"Hush, me little one," he said; "Moike don't want to play any more to-night."

They nestled closer into his lap, quietly looking up

into his face. Nothing could be heard outside except the storm; and within, the Widow Carey at the oar and the fire crackling in the grate.

"I sometimes think," he said at last, with his eyes still fixed on the flame, as though talking more to himself than to his listeners, "that I didn't do the roight thing in marryin' Maggie, an' takin' her away from that rich ould squire of an uncle who disowned her just because she loved a poor Irish lad loike me. Faith, I ought to ha' knowed better at the toime, for she was one o' the quality. She could play on the piane, an' sing, an' write a foine hand, an' she only siventeen at that. I was a poor chap, just gone twenty-siven, an' widout no edication to spake of. I moight ha' knowed I was niver fitted for one o' the loikes o' her."

"You're fit for a princess, Moike, so ye are," interrupted the woman. "Queen Victore herself might be proud o' the loikes o' you," stopping a moment on her way to the pantry.

"Well, I've always tried to be kind to her; bless her schwate soul!"

"I should think ye had tried to be kind to her;—buyin' a piane, wid a music-teacher besides;—sellin' yer hoss an' wagon to pay for it;—an' you needin' it all the toime at the grocery; an' not lettin' her know nothin' about it, nather, lest she moight feel bad!"

"Och, be still now. 'Twas selfishness intirely; don't ye suppose I'd carry me bundles all over town, wid me own legs, for the joy o' seein' one o' the ould-toime smiles on her purty face? It's true I've always tried to be kind to her, an' I always will; for she's dearer than me own heart's blood, so she is; but she's been a true an' faithful

wife to me. Sure it wasn't my fault that I loved her; for there wasn't a boy in all Kerry County that wouldn't ha' been proud to ha' had a wink o' her eye; but I ought to ha' knowed better than to ha' married such a schwate girl above me station, an' bring her down to the level of a poor lad loike me. Heigho!" he sighed.

Another silence. Strange what shadows a grate-fire will sometimes cast on the wall. The children, who had often romped with Mike, but had never seen him in a mood like this before, cuddled still closer to him, lest he should leave them altogether, he had seemed to go so far away. Presently he continued, still talking to that other self in the fire,—

"'Twould ha' broke me heart not to ha' had her for me wife. I'd lived twinty-siven years, an' I'd niver found a schwateheart that I could love until I met her that June mornin' swingin' on her uncle's gate. But I sometimes think that if some other feller, who knew more than I do, who was more of her equal loike, some feller loike that Signor Porta, who has such a dilicate skin, an' plays the fiddle so nice, an' can read story-books, an' quote poetry, an' tell all about what he's seen; I sometimes think that if I'd only left her alone for such as him——"

"I wouldn't give the end o' yer little finger, Moike, for a whole car-load o' Signor Portas," exclaimed the woman, snapping her dish-rag, thus pounding the pulpit, as it were, by way of emphasis. "And I tell ye what it is, Moike Barney, ye'd better look out for that Signor Porta and yer Maggie, wid his fiddles and his pianes. Shure any man o' sense would only need to look at the face on him to know what he is. I niver

knew one o' thim Italiens yet whose heart wasn't as black as his skin."

Mike turned his face full toward her now.

"Look out for him? An' wid my Maggie? Whist, woman; it's stark, starin' mad ye are. He may be black at heart: there's lots o' things in this world that I don't know very much about; but do you suppose a black coal out o' hell itself could lave a mark on the pure sun in the heavens? Don't ye niver let me hear ye say thim words again, Widee Carey. No! poor, disinherited choild that she is, it's her that's all roight. It's me that's been all wrong. The Lord knows I give her all there is of me, but the Lord knows it's little enough; it's little enough."

Just then the clock struck eight.

"Sure I must be goin' now," he added, quickly, getting up from his chair. "What can I do for ye this night?"

Without waiting for an answer, he went out and brought in several armfuls of fuel and laid them down by the fire. Then he caught each of the children in turn, tossed them three times toward the ceiling, dropped five candies apiece into their pockets, and started home.

When he drew near the neat little story-and-a-half cottage, and the click of the gate-latch was heard as it swung shut after he had passed through, Bob, inside, who, missing his master, had been for a long time whining at the door, scratching it with his paws, and then stopping to listen for his approach, broke into a loud bark, bounding from the door to the window, and from the window to the door again, wagging not only his great shaggy tail, but his whole body. No sooner had

his master entered than he jumped up against him with both paws, exclaiming, in short, quick barks, just as plainly as a dog could exclaim, "What in the world has kept you away so long?"

Mike was somewhat surprised to find no light burning in the sitting-room, and to miss the voice of little Katie, who at such times usually acted as a reserve corps after Bob, the advance guard, having exhausted his ammunition, and having been compelled by the enemy to "lie down," had given a signal for reinforcements.

"Ah, good feller! good feller!" patting him on the head and stroking him with both hands, "come along, an' we'll find Katie an' the little girl," his pet name for the wife, ten years younger than himself.

So he stepped into the next room, and then into the kitchen, the dog still bounding at his heels. They were not there, however, and the fire in the range had gone out. He went to the foot of the stairs and called,—

"Maggie!"

But there was no response. The dog ran half-way up the steps, eying his master and playing a tattoo with his tail against the stair above him, and then ran down again. Mike scratched his head, as though searching for an idea, and chanced to remember that a few days before Maggie had said to him that some time she intended spending the afternoon at a near neighbor's, where she often went.

"Purty late for my little girl to be out," he said, "an' it's a bad night for Katie to be catchin' cowld. They must be kept there by the storm, wonderin' why I haven't come afore this. Well, we'll have a nice warm place for 'em, so we will; won't we, Bob, old feller?"

Bob declared they would, emphasizing his assertion with many exclamation-points short and sharp.

So singing to himself, or whistling, or talking to the dog, Mike put coal on the grate in the sitting-room, then he kindled the fire in the range, and toasted some cheese, and put on the kettle, that all might be ready for the tea to steep when they should come; for an old bachelor, finally converted from the error of his ways, has a handy knack at such things which the rest of us never learn.

"Sure I can fetch 'em in a minute, an' it'll all be smokin' hot for 'em. It's late, but they won't have had their supper I know, for little Katie niver would consint to sit down to her evenin' meal widout her father's knee for a chair, an' drinkin' out o' the same cup wid myself. Och, the daisy!" Then he set the table, and put the chairs in their places, brought in an extra lamp, and gave an additional poke to the fire. "They'll need some extra coverin' such a night as this, so I'll just step upstairs an' get some shawls out o' the bedroom closet. No, Bob! Come down here!" he exclaimed, as the dog bounded up before him. "Stay in there, an' I'll be back in a minute," shutting the door of the sitting-room, into which Bob had unwillingly retired, and where he stood, whining, and then scratching with his paw, and then listening with his head turned interrogatively on one side.

With a candle in his hand Mike went up the stairs, two steps at a time, whistling a strain of "Rory O'More," a copy of which has just caught his attention spread open on the piano.

"Poor schwate choild; she was singin' that for me, so she was," he had murmured as he had glanced at it,

with a touch of pride. He went into Katie's bedroom, but the things were not in the closet as he had expected. The upper drawer of the bureau was open; he glanced into it as he passed, and it was empty. He recrossed the landing at the head of the stairs into his own room. He had stopped whistling now. The closet-door there, also, was wide open as he entered, and he could see that that, too, was vacant.

"Maggie's clothes gone, an' Katie's too?"

His own garments were laid out neatly on the bed. He felt a little dizzy, and his hand shook as he placed the candle down on the table.

"Maggie!" he exclaimed, quickly. "Maggie!"

He looked around as though she might still be there and he failed to have seen her. A pair of cuffs were on the bureau partially soiled, and a collar, and a ribbon he had bought her the day before. It was only a moment that his eye rested on these things, but in that moment he remembered how that was the very ribbon which she wore that morning when he bade her good-by, and how it had pleased him to find she cared enough for his gift to wear it so soon; and the thought came to him that even the collar was the one he had pressed when he had put his arm around her neck and lifted up her pretty face for a last kiss. Mechanically he took them and put them in his side-pocket, not knowing what he did. A gust of wind shook the windows. A sense of loneliness oppressed him. He almost felt afraid, and half wished he had brought up Bob. Then his eye fell on a note. Strange he had not seen it before. His hand trembled, and he could scarcely read. It was in her handwriting. For a moment he felt assured as he glanced at the first

line,—"My dear Husband," but he read on. A strange, sickening sensation stole over him. The letter dropped from his hands. He thought he was dying. It had suddenly become dark; some one must be taking away the light. He was about to cry for help, but the choking in his throat prevented him.

The hours had gone by since Bob had pricked up his ears and barked as he heard something fall heavily on the floor above him. Weary of waiting, he had at last stretched himself out before the fire, now dying in embers. The wind had fallen away into a low sob. One after another the lights had flickered, smouldered, and then gone out. Alas for the other light also, which went out of a human heart on that night!

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## CHAPTER II.

SHOWING HOW A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED, AND ALSO HOW THE FRIEND INDEED MAY SOMETIMES SUDDENLY BECOME A FRIEND IN NEED.

It seemed like the trembling step of an old man which, toward morning, came slowly down the creaking stairs. Bob heard it, and recognized it as his master's; but even a dog has his periods of obtuseness when awakened out of a sound sleep. So, stretching himself as he arose, he yawned, and walked lazily toward the door. When Mike entered, the hands of the clock were pointing to half-past five.

"More'n three hours afore the train starts," he murmured, seating himself by the hearth, and burying his face in his hands. This was a good sign: a man is past shivering when the frost has indeed touched his vitals. The crisis was over: he was to live,—to live and to suffer. Thou art a member of a large brotherhood, Mike.

Having rekindled the fire and relit the lamps, he read to himself again the fatal letter:

"MY DEAR HUSBAND:

"Good-by. When you find this I will be far away. I was a mere child when I married you, and I thought I loved you. There is, however, nothing in common between us, and I have not been happy for a long time. I confess I am not happy now, but hope to be, in the company of Signor Porta. The life I have been living is smaller than the life I am fitted to live. Forgive me; and, as soon as you can—forget me.

"MAGGIE."

The letter of a heartless, selfish woman? Yes, and Maggie Barney was a heartless, selfish woman. Not that she had ever until now deliberately intended to be such; only she had never deliberately intended not to be. The weeds had not been nurtured, but neither had the flowers, and so the weeds grew. Petted by a fickle uncle in whose home she had grown up, disowned by him when, true to her training, she had married against his will; caressed and humored by the noble, guileless soul whose greatest joy was to pour everything at her feet,—she had all her lifetime sat, a spoiled queen, claiming the prerogatives of royalty, and forgetting its duties. She

had never awakened to the fact of all facts in this universe, that no self-centred life can ever be helpful or happy,—that the only open sesame to this great mystery of being is self-sacrifice, and that he who would find his life must indeed first lose it. Hers had simply been that natural gravitation of character which always comes from the absence of a noble purpose. Thus, through all these years, the mine had been secretly preparing, and then Fate easily provided a Porta to light the fuse. The translation of a French novel lay open on the table. It was well thumbed, and on the fly-leaf was written the name of her betrayer. Mike tore out the leaf and threw the book into the fire.

"It was you who writ me that lyin' note an' sint me off on a fool's errand, that ye moight have more toime to get away wid yer plunder."

Then, as a fresh sense of his loss came over him, his head sunk upon his arms on the table, and he sobbed aloud. Bob came and stood beside him, laying his neck across his knee, and uttering a low whine. God be thanked for sympathy, even from a dog! How often have these dumb brutes saved the utter breaking of a human heart! Mike heard the cry, and, stroking his head, said,—

"Bob, ould feller, you won't lave yer master because he's ignorant an' don't know nothin', will ye? There's nobody could coax you away from him, is there?" And he laid his face close down to the dog's, who licked his cheek. "Ah, but I didn't think anybody could coax her away, either. I didn't,—for sure I didn't. An' they've taken our little Katie, Bob; an' I'll niver see ye playin' an' rompin' wid her no more, as I've seed ye

so many times in this very room." And again, as the picture of those happy days presented itself, his great heart heaved and the sobs shook his frame. On the mantel stood the clock, surmounted by a crucifix, his last Christmas present to Maggie, and above it a picture of the Virgin Mary. A prayer-book lay on the table. As he took it up it chanced to open to the "Devotion of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin." Reverently he knelt and repeated the prayer:

"O Holy Virgin, example of patience, by the most painful carrying of the cross, on which thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, bore the heavy weight of our sins, obtain for us of Him, by thy intercession, courage and strength to follow His steps, and bear our cross after Him to the end of our lives. Amen." For a long time he remained kneeling, with his eyes closed and his hands clasped. Who shall say that that prayer from one of earth's desolate ones fell with broken wing before it reached the throne, shot through with heaven's arrows, because a soul untutored had addressed it to the Mother Heart of God?

As soon as the day had dawned Mike started for the residence of Father O'Flynn, with the dog following through the snow at his heels. While there was not much danger of any of his neighbors being out so early in the morning, he nevertheless chose the back streets, for he wanted to be sure of meeting no one whom he knew. The wounded stag seeks a hiding-place. When he reached the parsonage he found that the priest had gone away, and would not return for a week or a fortnight; so he turned his steps toward the house of Hans Volgate, stopping at the store on the way to arouse Pete,

who was the boy, and caution him to look after the Careys, and to take care of Bob and the customers till his return. It was yet early when he came again to the German's door which he had so recently left.

"Vy, Michael, how you vas once more?" exclaimed that individual. "Vat haf bring you here so soon already? Haf dose peoples wrote some more letters dot I vas gone mit der consumption, uh?" placing his hands on either side his fat little stomach and laughing good-naturedly.

"Worse'n that," answered the other, with a grave countenance.

"Vorse as das! Vat could be vorse as das? Haf they said dot I vas run for Congress? Oh, no; dot vas too badly. Ha! ha! Perhaps I haf killed mine grandmudder und eat up mine little childrens, hey?"

"Hans, can ye kape a sacret?" asked Mike, with a sigh, involuntarily lifting his hand, as though deprecating his friend's merry mood.

"I dinks I can, Michael. I dinks I can keep a secret, und every dings else vat I can lay mine hands on besides. Sit down, my friend, und haf a glass o' beer."

Mike fidgeted in his chair as though scarcely knowing how to begin, and looked uneasily around, fearful that his words might be overheard. When he had convinced himself that all the doors were shut, he said, solemnly,—

"Hans, I ha'n't got no home no more."

"Gracious heavens, was you burned out on such a night like dis, by chiminey?" throwing up his little fat hands and looking serious.

"No, Hans; worse'n that."

"Vorse as das! Everydings seems to be vorse as das.

Vat is der matter, mine friend? Speak out, und tell me right avay quick."

"I ha'n't got no wife no more, Hans."

"Dead already? Und since last night?"

"Worse'n that, Hans."

"Vorse as das, again? Not dead, but *vorse as das!* Michael, mine old friend, you don't mean dot—dot——" And he drew his chair hastily closer up to the other and looked anxiously into his face.

"Yes, I do, Hans; that's just what I do mane. The Lord ha' marcy on her poor soul! She and my Katie went away last night."

"She und your Katie? She und your Katie? und—und—und——"

"Signor Porta."

For a few moments they sat in silence, Mike with his eyes fixed on the floor and Hans gazing earnestly at Mike. Then springing up, he exclaimed,—

"Michael, put on your tings right avay quick. Ve vill find vere dey haf gone. Ve vill chase dem till ve catch dem, if ve haf to go to hell to get dem. Put on your tings, Michael! Put on your tings! I vill go mit you right avay."

They could very easily have caught the 8.50 train, even had it been on time. As it was two hours late on account of the storm, they were compelled to wait impatiently at the station. Inquiry at the office on the part of Hans elicited the fact that the fugitives had purchased tickets to New York. As the passengers had been very few from Jenkinstown on that stormy day, the agent could readily identify them from the description which was rendered.

Thither the two men followed, Mike vainly expostulating from time to time with his excitable friend, lest by his bursts of indignation he should publish the elopement, which he himself most anxiously sought to conceal.

"Be aisy, Hans," he pleaded; "be aisy, for little Katie's sake, ye know, and the poor guirl's herself. It's very badly she's feelin' before this, I'm sure; an' if she should be pinitent, yer know, while she niver could be to me the white blossom that she once was, Lord bless her, I don't want to see her ruined before the world."

As they neared their destination, the question arose as to the next steps to be pursued. Hans was in favor of going directly to the detectives' office and securing their assistance; but Mike would hear naught of this, through his fear of the fact becoming public. It was finally determined, therefore, that Hans should himself assume the rôle of a detective; whereupon he carefully noted down in his memorandum-book the minute description which Mike furnished of the parties, whom he himself had only casually seen.

When the cars drew into the station on the Jersey side, it was a time of intense excitement to the susceptible German. He was tremblingly alive to the responsibility he had assumed, of the necessity of wasting no moments and neglecting no clue. He could not even stand still while they were crossing the river, but paced up and down the ferry-boat with the glowing eagerness of the hunter already on the scent of the game.

"Hans, be aisy; plaze be aisy!" Mike earnestly whispered, as his friend approached where he stood, shifting from one foot to the other. "Don't ye see

they're all lookin' at ye? Faith, they'll be guessin' our sacret, an' the poor guirl 'll be ruined intirely, so she will, before the day's out. Be aisy, I tell ye, be aisy!" But he might as well have tried to silence Niagara with an argument or quench Vesuvius with a blotter.

"Cab, sir?—cab?—cab? cab, sir? cab? cab? cab?" came from a dozen voices as they landed, whose owners appeared ready to seize them by force and hurry them each into his own conveyance, *nolens volens.*

"No, ve don't vant no cab," said Hans, motioning them away. Then he paused, looked down, placed one finger by the side of his nose, and thought. A happy idea had seized him.

"Michael," he whispered, after hastily leading that individual into an obscure corner,—"Michael, if ve could find vhich one uf dem fellers mit der cab took avay dot couple mit der hotel, ve could track dem right avay, pretty quick."

There was no time to lose; the suggestion was certainly a good one; so it was determined that Hans should again brave the Gatling-gun battery of human voices, capture one prisoner at a time, and lead him in to be interrogated quietly in the waiting-room. "The woman who hesitates is lost." Hans seemed to be in danger of the same fate as, stepping into their midst, he was greeted with a like volley as before.

"Cab, sir? cab? cab, sir? cab? cab? cab?"

With the sense of his responsibility resting upon him and the importance of decisive action, he was seized with what the Western hunters call "buck fever,"—an experience which comes to the uninitiated sportsman when the game seems dangerously near, and he stands, trem-

bling in every joint, without pulling his trigger, and scarcely conscious whether he is hunting or being hunted: his mental hopper being so stuffed that while there may be a plenty of wits there, none of them can run out to be ground into action. Most of the people had gone, so that to the eyes of these disappointed Jehus Hans stood for a forlorn hope. They noticed his confusion, and at once surrounded him. One touched him on one shoulder, and when he was about to talk with him another touched him on the other, while a third jumped on the box of his carriage, drove it up, and cried, as he leaped down and opened the door, "Here you are, sir; here you are. Take'e any place in'e city want to go. Step right in, sir; step right in."

"I don't vant you already," he finally exclaimed, flourishing his arms as vigorously as the previously-mentioned sportsman flourishes his legs when, awakening from his stupor, he sees the "buck" or "grizzly" charging upon him.

"I don't vant you already," he repeated, pulling himself away. Then, as a fourth man came to add his solicitations to the rest, "Un I don't vant you, too. I don't vant anybody," still swinging his arms. Finally forgetting all caution, he shouted, "I vants der man vat took dot runavay couple mit der little girl, last night, to der hotel around."

From the number of responses one would certainly have imagined that the day previous had been Hymen's birthday, or at least some grand anniversary in his honor, and that every vehicle had been employed in conducting runaway couples to his shrine. At last two were selected who, from the description furnished by Hans, gave

positive assurance, each for himself, that he could find the parties for whom they sought. One vehemently declared that he had taken them to the Astor House, while the other just as zealously affirmed that he had driven them to the St. Nicholas. So Mike drove off with the first, leaving his friend to follow in company with the second, having previously arranged that the last-named hotel, the St. Nicholas, should be the place of ultimate rendezvous. Hans entertained a painful consciousness as he drove away that, in his efforts at secrecy, he had attracted about as much attention as he possibly could; and being thus out of humor with himself, was, like the unsuccessful "star" after the play, ready to denounce all the rest of the troupe.

This latent consciousness of dissatisfaction made him, moreover, all the more susceptible to the sallies of the disappointed drivers who were left behind, and, by causing him to manifest a spirit of irritability, invited their attacks.

"Good-by, Sauerkraut!" shouted one.

"Oh, Limberger Kase!" exclaimed another, turning away his head and assuming an expression of disgust.

The little German shook his fist out of the window, and shouted something back which they failed to hear, and only greeted with a derisive laugh.

At last he arrived at his destination, and stepped out, inwardly resolving that he would not again on any account be betrayed into a publication of his secret. Having dismissed the driver, he walked cautiously and with studied calmness toward the clerk's office, and read carefully the list of arrivals for the previous day. His heart throbbed violently as his eye rested on the signature of a

gentleman who, with his wife and child, had engaged apartments on that date. True, the name was different, but that was to be expected. Old names are like old wash-rags: when they become too black they are thrown away. It is easier to get a new one than to clean up the old.

"Vat kinds uf peoples vas doze?" he asked.

"What kind of people are those?" replied the clerk, stopping, for a moment in his writing to glance at the register, and then looking out from under his eyebrows at Hans with that peculiar affability which characterizes certain persons when they find themselves placed in some position of small authority. "I don't know what kind of people they are. Do you suppose I know everybody that comes to this hotel?"

"I mean vat kinds uf peoples vas doze?" tapping his finger emphatically on the open page. "Vat vos der color uf der hair?" still resolving not to reveal his secret on any account, but eager to unravel the clue.

"I don't know the color of their hair, either. Do you take me for a barber-shop?" And the man went on writing.

Failing to find the information he sought, he decided to investigate for himself. So, taking the number of the apartment, he strolled into the reading-room a few moments, that he might divert the clerk's attention, and then walked unobserved up the stairs. It was a corner room at the crossing of two passages, and Hans concluded, from the position of the doors, that it could be entered from either one. While he was cautiously approaching, a gentleman turned the corner near where he stood and brushed past him.

"Dot vas him, mitout no mistake," he muttered hastily to himself. "Und he must haf comed out uf dot door on der odder side." This suspicion was confirmed as he glanced at the description of Porta, which he held in his hand: "black curly hair, dark features, medium height, and a seal ring on his little finger."

"Dot vas him, mitout no mistake," he whispered again, quickly, hesitating whether to follow or to await his return and proceed with his investigations. Having decided on the latter course, he stepped softly up to the door nearest him, which was partly open, and looked in.

Across the room there was a child asleep in a little cot.

"Poor little Katie; all tired out mit der cold journey und strange oxperiences," he murmured, shaking his fist toward the stairs down which the man had disappeared.

He could not be certain, however, that the sleeping infant tallied with the description without seeing it closer at hand. He stopped and listened, looking cautiously about the room, the whole of which he could clearly observe from where he stood. A curtained bedstead was in one corner, and the cot not far from it, and near that an open door, which he supposed led into the other passage. He concluded to pass quietly through the chamber and out of that door, stopping a moment to study the child's features on his way. On tiptoe he stole noiselessly in. To his intense chagrin the child did not correspond to the description at all. That demanded golden hair; but here was black. That called for a girl; but from the jacket and the part on the side of the head this was evidently a boy.

Just as Hans had made these discoveries, a rustling

was heard within the curtains of the bed. Some one was surely there. He had only time to escape through the door into what he supposed would prove to be the passage-way. Alas! it was a large closet; and instead of leading to liberty, presented the best of all prospects of leading to the station-house.

Retreat was out of the question, for just then the curtains parted, and a middle-aged lady, in her pink flannel wrapper, who had awakened from a morning nap, stepped out on the floor, rubbed her eyes, yawned, and walked toward the looking-glass to arrange her toilet before lunch. The bewildered Hans, trembling in every limb, with the perspiration breaking out over his forehead, quickly crept behind some hanging garments, which he hoped would afford a temporary shelter till some way of escape might present itself. Unfortunately, the space between the wall and the drapery was very limited, and the door being wide open, he shook with terror lest he should be discovered. Peeping out from between the garments, suddenly jerking back his head whenever she turned in his direction, he endeavored to make himself as small as possible by drawing in his breath, standing very straight and on his tiptoes, throwing back his arms, with sundry other devices. For the first time in his life he grievously lamented his healthy appearance. He who on that very morning had prided himself on his hale and hearty rotundity was now emulating as his ideal the unsubstantial shadow, which with length and breadth has no thickness at all; for while he could manage his shoulders and, with a reasonable degree of satisfaction, his feet, in spite of his best efforts to be slender his stomach would obtrude, making a curved line in his

hanging screen, which he rightly deemed highly perilous to his safety.

He was now utterly discomfited; for, added to his danger, he was obliged to recognize the fact that he had been following an entirely false clue. The lady, instead of being young and fair and beautiful, was, on the contrary, quite angular and unornamental. Her locks, instead of falling in rich raven tresses about her head, were red, scant, and grizzly. The forehead, instead of being low and wide, was narrow and bald, and appeared to the utmost advantage in that respect, as the hair was drawn tightly back and screwed up into a little bulb behind, which reminded him, even in his moment of terror, of the ornamental mouldings he had sometimes seen on the side of a round-topped hitching-post. The perspiration which was already bathing Hans from head to foot started out afresh as he saw her move toward the door leading into the hall, shut it, and turn the key. He shuddered to think of his situation. She then proceeded to take several auburn curls from the drawer where they had lain secreted and fasten them over the bald spot in front and the bulb behind. Now,

"Oh, hail, horrors, hail!"

she turns toward the closet—approaches—stopping only for a moment at the wash-stand to adjust certain useful ornaments, which, as she opens her mouth, seem to glide in like living things and crawl into their places. She draws near—nearer—nearer still. Hans thinks he can hear her breathe, but is determined she shall not hear him. With agony of resolution he gathers himself up into his very thinnest proportions, but all to no avail.

She brushes right against him on her way to the other end of the closet. She has passed by; he was unnoticed! She brushes against him on her way out: she has gone! He begins to breathe more freely. He almost feels happy; for what is happiness, very often, but less misery? But behold, she is coming back! She stands and surveys the very apparel which forms his sole protection, while she deliberates as to which garment will most add to her attractiveness at the lunch-table. Her eye falls upon the bulging curvature, which looks as though some great rag-bag were hung out of sight against the wall. With feminine curiosity she thrusts her fist against it. Lo, all is over. The crisis is reached. Hans, who was not prepared for so sudden an attack, suffered to escape his lips a distinct grunt. I will not attempt to describe in detail what ensued. The screams of the frightened woman brought him from his hiding-place. In vain he attempted to explain; her shrieks drowned his voice. The scuffle of many feet was heard approaching from without. "Thieves! thieves! thieves!" she cried, running to the door and unlocking it. "Thieves! Burglars! Murder! Help!" The first to enter were two porters, who took it for granted that if

"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just,"

the converse was equally true, and he who hath his quarrel just ought to be thrice armed. So one with the coal-scuttle and shovel, and the other with the poker and tongs, valiantly approached the little man, and while dancing round him, striking at him from a safe distance, and then precipitately retreating, joined in the shout of murder.

There was no danger of the house not being aroused; the boy in the crib, thus awakened from a sound sleep, added a testimony of his own in the major key. Hans would doubtless have suffered much rough treatment had it not been for the timely arrival of two policemen who had been summoned from the street. The prisoner was immediately handcuffed, preparatory to being marched away to jail.

"What's your name, mum, please?" said one of the officers to the lady.

"My name's Mrs. DeCamp: Mrs. Colonel Squealum DeCamp," she said, and entered forthwith into an account of the attempted robbery.

"I suppose you'll be present, mum, to prefer the charges?"

"Prefer the charges against that rascal?" she answered, putting her hands up to her hair and thinking of her teeth; wondering whether he had discovered the little deception, which for some years she had sacredly cherished as a family secret. "Of course I will. Just as sure as my name's Mrs. Squealum DeCamp."

"Go way mit you!" Hans exclaimed, trying to release himself from his novel situation. "Go way mit you!"

"Yes, that's just what you will do: go way with us," replied one of the men, tightening his grip, and threateningly lifting his club as he dragged him along, with a crowd following at his heels, part of whom declared he had killed five men, while others limited it to only two.

"I did not vant to steal nodings," he persisted.

"Oh, no! You didn't want to steal! Of course not. You belong to a Sunday-school, don't you? In the infant class, on the top row, among the little innocents,

maybe!" Then, not noticing the frequent interruptions of his prisoner, he continued, "Oh, yes, of course! You was only playin' a friendly game o' hide-an'-seek with the old lady, wasn't you? You was just about to cry Peek-a-boo when she jabbed you in the stomach, wasn't you? Oh, yes, we've seen your kind before, we have. Come, gallop!"

"I only vants dot vomans vat runned avay mit dot man," he said, excitedly.

"Well, we've got her down here. A dozen of 'em; all colors. You can take your pick. Come on! None o' your foolin', mind," lifting his club again as if to strike.

Resistance was of no avail. For the first time in his life the poor good-natured German, who had scarcely ever had an enemy, was led as a prisoner into a damp cell, and compelled to receive his board and lodging at the public expense.

Stretching himself out on the plank which was to serve him for a bed, he muttered,—

"Vell, I don't like dis pretty vell; but poor Michael! I vonder how he vill get on mitout mine help?"

## CHAPTER III.

RELATING SOME FURTHER EXPERIENCES OF MICHAEL, AND IN THE MEAN TIME INTRODUCING US MORE INTIMATELY TO THE GIDDY YOUNG THING OF UNCERTAIN AGE WHOM WE FIRST MET IN THE LAST CHAPTER.

WHEN Michael had parted from Hans at the depot, he had driven directly to the Astor House. Whether his personal interest made him more keen, or the additional clue in his possession (Porta's handwriting, which he had torn out of the novel) made his task easier, he certainly discovered, sooner than his companion had, that he was on the wrong track.

"Why don't you try all the hotels?" suggested the cabman, who, as he saw his troubled countenance, really began to feel considerable interest in the case.

"Well, I think I will," he answered, drawing a sigh, and stepping into the carriage. The man snapped his whip, and the two rattled up Broadway. They halted at one place after another, but without success. It was late in the afternoon, when, bending over the counter of an obscure hotel, which at that time stood at the corner of Canal Street and the Bowery, Mike, wearied and disheartened by repeated failures, felt the blood rush into his face, and the book swim before his eyes, when he saw on the register not only the handwriting, but the very name of the man he sought.

Strange that he should have written his own name? No stranger, friend, than that which happens every day.

Who could truthfully transcribe the story of a crime and omit the unaccountable blindness which it causes at some pivotal juncture,—the failure to cross the t or dot the i, by which the skilled forger in the very moment of success betrays the plot, which through long months has been crawling forward to the crisis: that mysterious insanity of sin which the ancients attributed to Nemesis, and we to the permissive providence of God; that awful fact, emblazoned in every column of our morning journals, of the self-destructive power of iniquity, when, like the swine of the Gadarenes, men once admit a demon, and "rush violently down a steep place into the sea, to perish in the waters"?

"Is that man here now?" he asked the clerk.

"That man here?—er—no. He left about two hours ago."

"Is the lady and the child here?"

"No, I don't think they are. He paid his bill and ordered a carriage. I think they all went together. Here, Charles, go up to forty-eight and see if the room is vacant."

"Forty-eight's all gone, sir; I carried down the baggage myself," replied the porter.

"And where did they go?" cried Mike.

"Well, I heard 'em give notice to be carried down to the Neptune steamer; but I fancy it must be pretty near time for her to sail."

"Where? A steamer across the ocean?" He waited for no answer. Rushing out to his cab, he shouted, "Take me down to the Neptune steamer! Quick, now! Quick! Ten dollars if you get me there before it goes!"

The driver lashed his horses: they dashed off down

Canal Street toward the North River; Mike leaning forward, peering from the window, and occasionally calling for the driver to go faster, faster, still faster. People on the sidewalk, startled by the rattle of the wheels and the clatter of the horses' hoofs, turned to look after them. Now the crowd of vehicles obstructed their way. With clinched hands lifted in the attitude of prayer, the nails digging deep down into his palm, Mike ejaculated,—

"Oh, Holy Mother, don't forsake me now. Save the poor darlin' an' the little choild. Why didn't I know this before? Here I've bin wastin' all the mornin', an' perhaps it's too late."

Now they have passed through the labyrinth of carriages. Once more the horses plunge forward, goaded by the lash—on toward West Street, skirting the river. Another delay—and just in sight of the wharf. A horse has fallen down two blocks away, and the long line of cars prevent all progress. An officer stands trying to preserve order among the constantly-arriving carriages. Mike hails him,—

"Has the Neptune steamer sailed?"

"Neptune steamer? Yes. Just sailed ten minutes ago."

He fell back in his seat, half conscious, like one who had received a sudden blow. The red-faced, burly driver descended from his box, and looked pityingly through the window.

"Where shall I take you now?" he asked, in a voice which, for him, was tender.

In a half-bewildered tone Mike gave directions to be carried back to his friend. The man remounted his box; the horses slowly retraced their steps, and every sound of their hoofs reminded Mike that he was being carried

each moment farther and farther away from the ship which had on board—his world. When they reached the hotel, the man opened the carriage-door as deferentially as though he had within the queen of England.

"Lean on me," he said, in a low voice, offering his arm.

"Thanks, but I don't need any help now," replied Mike, stepping out on the pavement. His face was pale, and his body swayed as he spoke.

For a long time he sat in the hotel waiting for Hans to appear. The storm without, which had ceased in the early part of the day, began to fall once more in large flakes. He stepped to the door and looked up. The skies were thick with those hanging, woolly clouds so portentous in these Northern climes. He shuddered as he thought of the ship riding into the night and the tempest. He contrasted it, rocking and plunging, the wind shrieking through its rigging, with those warm bright evenings which had seemed so happy, in the little home at Jenkinstown, before the tempter had cast his shadow across their hearth. He went back and sat in the deepening darkness, his thoughts busy with plans even yet of intercepting their flight, of securing the return of Katie, and an asylum for Maggie when her betrayer should have cast her off.

"I niver could receive her back again, but if I could only get some message to her uncle I might make his heart soft for her, poor thing, whin the toime comes that she'll need a pillow to die on. He could sind back little Katie wid some one, or I'd cross the ocean to bring her back, for the matter o' that, an' we two would live together to the end. If I could only have some place ready for poor Maggie across the sea whin the hour of

her need comes, I could at least be sure that she'd niver die o' hunger or cowld."

They were already beginning to light the lamps in the corridor; the gong sounded for supper.

"Sure it's strange that he don't come," he said to himself. "I guess I'll see if he's been here."

As he walked toward the office, he stopped at the stationer's stand to buy an evening paper, that he might read the list of passengers in the "Fire-Fly." A lady and gentleman stood there purchasing reserved seats for the evening performance at the theatre.

"Oh, it was perfectly horrid," he heard her exclaim, as he stood near them awaiting his turn. "Such impudence, too! To think that little Dutch rascal should be shut up with me in my room when I was making my toilet. And who knows but he might have told those policemen all about it, and those dreadful reporters might get hold of it, and what if it should get into the newspapers! It would be sure to be copied into the *Groveland News*, and how that awful Mrs. Flowers would crow. I wish I hadn't given my name to that officer. Why, it was perfectly horrid!"

Mike looked at the gentleman, who made no response, but, with an amused twinkle in his eye, simply puffed away at his cigar, running his finger across the card meanwhile which he held in his hand like a man who not only thoroughly understood his own strength, but his wife's weakness, and having long since sized her, so to speak, had acquired the habit of treating her garrulous vanity by day much as he did her innocent snoring by night,—as something which she could not very well help, which did nobody any harm, and which a wise man

would therefore philosophically accept as one of the inevitabilities of life, and possibly as an object of quiet amusement. She was no more responsible for the cast of mind which caused the one than for the lengthened uvula which caused the other. In all probability they were simply heirlooms from some remote ancestor; what we might term, if we were poetically inclined, "echoes of antiquity." Had her silly vanity been the prevailing feature of her character, it would doubtless have nauseated him long ago; but possessing, as she did, so many admirable qualities of the heart, he had learned to ignore these failings of hers, very much as a man who feels not exactly satisfied with the house he lives in may yet be willing to forgive the cramped kitchen on account of the pleasant parlor.

As we shall meet her again, perhaps I might better describe her at once. She was by no means a stupid woman; in fact, she was occasionally witty; but one was inclined at such times to feel that perhaps they would rather have less wit with less consciousness of it; it was so evident that the pinch of snuff was offered simply to exhibit the snuff-box.

She was, moreover, a very kind woman, provided she could be made to forget herself and her own personal adornments long enough to comprehend the needs of others. She was, for example, always ready to assist at a funeral, or other emergency which might occur in the neighborhood, only she generally took so long a time to hook, button, and pin herself together in what she felt to be a becoming style, that, like those brilliant repartees which all of us have failed to utter, she came just a little too late.

Furthermore, she was considerable of an authoress, and had even published some works of fiction at her husband's expense: works which could be found at any time in red and gilt binding on her parlor table, and (I speak it only between ourselves) scarcely anywhere else. As for her heroines, they were always selected from the extremes of society, and there was not one among them with a crooked nose, or even a pug. They were invariably "beautiful as a Madonna," and whether born with the heritage of a duke's daughter, or doomed to work by ignorant parents in a factory from five in the morning till eight at night, they talked in periods and quoted French. They were, in fact, remarkable young women, for, however humble their origin, they were each one, when the time came for marrying the count, not only able to entertain duchesses in a becoming manner, but to dance with princes; performing with equal degree of grace anything from a quadrille to the german.

Her heroes all had heavy black moustaches and dark, piercing eyes. In carriage they were "erect as an Indian;" they never walked like the rest of us poor mundane mortals, but "strode with measured stately pace." They were usually convicted of some great crime in chapter first; cruelly hung in chapter second; mourned and found guiltless in chapter third; mysteriously raised to life in chapter fourth; and in chapters fifth to fifteenth inclusive, amid much misunderstanding with the heroine, who had so marvellously rescued them when all others supposed them dead, and who was made to declare emphatically several times that, "Oh, heavens, she should go mad, mad!" (which she never exactly did, though by her hysterical conversations, carried on in italics, she

succeeded in convincing the reader that she was well under way), they talked a great deal of nonsense about the stars; after which, in the sixteenth chapter, they went to the parson, and set up housekeeping on their own account. According to Mrs. Colonel DeCamp's theory of life, the end was then reached, and there was no more to be done; so that henceforth and forever they remained in red and gilt morocco on the parlor table, or tumbled helplessly about in plain cloth, in the garrets and cubby-holes of those chosen friends to whom a copy had been presented, "with the compliments of the author."

In addition to these arduous labors, she had been what is commonly termed a society woman. During the life of her first husband, Colonel Squealum (whose name she still retained on account of its aristocratic associations in Groveland, where she lived), she had been accustomed, at least three nights of the week in the season, either to give a company or attend one; varying the programme, occasionally, with a visit to the opera or theatre. Friday night she always reserved for prayer-meeting at the Presbyterian church; for, as she often said to herself, when a fit of indigestion or a headache made her thoughtfully pious, "she did not want to be so swallowed up in the gayeties of this wicked world as to neglect her religious duties." Such periodic attacks of holiness, however, were not of a malignant type, and generally yielded speedily to the magic influence of a blue pill.

Thus, her evenings at home were confined to Saturday and Sunday. At the present time she had no children; the boy who had played the part of the siren, to lure Hans to his woe, being her nephew, temporarily left in

her charge. When her only child by her first husband, young Roderick Rosevelt, died, the doctor described the cause of his early demise very clearly to the stricken Squealums by a number of Latin terms, any one of which sounded sufficiently fatal; but in the bosom of his own family he stated in plain English that the real disease was "too much nurse-girl and too little mother." It was not strange, therefore, after these years of gayety, that she should have somewhat withered. True, her hair (paid for with hard cash) at this present time fell in rich, golden profusion over beautiful eyebrows and rosy cheeks (Lubin's best; warranted not to rub off), and when she appeared at a ball or the opera she was still as much like a blushing bride as on that evening long ago, when all the aristocratic circles of Groveland had driven to her father's mansion to see her "come out." The beholder, however, if he was at all observant, would be likely to be reminded of a night-blooming cereus preserved in alcohol.

Her present husband was a quiet, shrewd man, of far greater insight than his predecessor, and was five years her junior, having married her for her money. A year after the wedding he had prevailed upon her to transfer all her property into his hands, for, as he said to himself, "nobody knows what may happen." Accordingly, he was at this time a director in one of the Groveland banks, and gave good promise in the future of becoming its president. Thus being in such solid circumstances with the world, he could very well afford to puff quietly at his Havana, and endure with reasonable good nature her loquacious prattle.

"It's perfectly horrid! The awful thing!" she re-

peated. "That he should come crawling up there. I don't see why they don't shut up all such people." They walked away toward the dining-room, she giving her head a final shake, that her curls might be in the proper degree of orderly disorder to create the right impression of *negligé*.

After purchasing the paper and glancing hurriedly at the "Fire-Fly" list of passengers, Mike hastened to the clerk's desk, and made inquiry concerning Hans. That personage, in replies which, in their brevity and crispness, sounded like the crackling of pop-corn when sufficiently heated, conveyed to him a statement of the occurrences of the afternoon, and at his further request informed him where he would be likely to find his "friend," emphasizing this last word, and scanning carefully his physiognomy, tucking a copy of it away meantime in his mental repository, as the banker does with a bad bill, for future reference in case of need.

It was not long before Mike had found his way to the station-house where Hans was confined. The cries of a drunken woman could be heard as he entered, coming up from below; she had been arrested as the result of imbibing ten glasses of lager beer, and was vociferously calling for somebody to come and bail her out. After considerable effort he obtained permission from the sergeant in charge to see the prisoner, whom he sought at the door of his cell, in company with an officer. The unfortunate little German was pacing backward and forward, by no means pleased with his new quarters, but grieved most of all by the loss of his pipe, which had been taken from him while they were searching for his burglar's set of skeleton keys.

When he heard the sound of footsteps and the unlocking of the gate at the end of the corridor, and saw the light appearing, he pressed the side of his face up against the bars of his cell-door, peering down the alleyway to see if it could be interpreted into a beam of hope. As Michael drew near, his face brightened up, and, thrusting his hand out, he exclaimed, "Vy, mine old friend, how you vas again? Gif me you hand. Dis vas awful bad, don't it? Haf you find dem peoples? Dot vill oxplain it all."

Mike repeated the story of his adventures as clearly as he could, without conveying too much information to the policeman who stood beside him. When he had finished, the last spark of hope had disappeared from the face of Hans.

"Dot vas too bad," he murmured, shaking his head thoughtfully. "You don't feel very goot?"

"No, I don't," said Mike.

"So do I;" once more nodding his head mournfully from side to side.

The officer turned away and laughed. Mike saw it, and thought he might prove friendly.

"He's as innocent as a babby," he remarked, pointing to Hans.

"Yes?" replied the other, laconically, smiling as he glanced at the prisoner's baby-like proportions.

"Isn't there any way he can be let out?"

"Well, he might get bail; or, if the parties should refuse to make a charge before the case is called, of course he wouldn't be held."

"Vat for I vants to be held for, by chiminey?" exclaimed the German, excitedly. "I vas only dere lookin'

for dot baby. Do you tinks dot jury vill hold me ven I told dem dot? Vould I go crawlin' in dere like a viper, lookin' at dot vomans mit her teeth out und a forehead mit a head all round, uh?"

Mike's thoughts reverted to the conversation he had overheard an hour before.

"Would ye tell that to the jury?" he asked.

"I vould dell dem all about it, shust like as it vas," replied the honest German.

Mike scratched his head, but said nothing. It would be scarcely proper to say that he thought anything. His mental processes were far different from the lightning "which shineth out of the east, even unto the west." But there appeared against his intellectual horizon a far-away speck, as of a small bird, like a carrier-dove bringing a message. What it was he could scarcely guess himself, so he very wisely kept his own counsel till he should have observed what this strange thing might be.

"Good-by, Hans," he said, sorrowfully, at length, as the bird approached no nearer. "Kape up your courage, me boy: I'll be wid ye in the mornin', though the Lord knows how I'll spind this night. If it was to die ye was afore the dawn, I'd gladly be changin' places wid ye, so I would."

"Nefer mind some tings about me, mine friend," replied Hans. "If you vas only caught dot rascal, I don't vas nefer so happy in mine life."

As Mike passed through the sergeant's room he asked,—

"Suppose nobody should appear agin that man, would he be let to git away?"

"Yes," replied the other; "if no charges were brought, of course he would be released."

Michael returned straight to the hotel, and for a long time sat and thought. Meanwhile the bird drew nearer, and when he had at last delivered his message, Mike discovered it to be a suggestion that the plan now to pursue was to make a personal call on Mr. and Mrs. DeCamp. So once more he approached the individual with the pop-corn manner of speech, who acted in the capacity of clerk, and asked,—

"Is Mr. DeCamp at home?"

"No."

"Will he be home to-night?"

"Suppose so."

"Do you know where he's gone?"

"Theatre."

After about an hour of impatient waiting Mike saw the gentleman and lady whom he sought enter the door and pass up toward their apartments.

"What a delicious performance that was!" he heard her remark as she swept by him. "What a handsome man that star was! And how he did say, 'Here lies Juliet!' And then when he died: oh, wasn't he the perfection of grace? It really made me cry! Are my eyes red?" And she looked with some alarm into her husband's face, as though Lubin might in her extremity have deserted her. For the sixth time since the moist moment of Romeo's death she wiped her face with her pocket-handkerchief, to distribute the delicate "Lily of the Valley" more evenly over the inflamed spots.

Mike waited till they were gone, and then approaching the clerk once more, said,—

"Will ye plaze sind up word to Mr. and Mrs. DeCamp that a man would loike to see 'em on special business?"

"What name?"

"Michael Barney; but they dunno who that is. Tell 'em it's on very important business that mustn't be delayed, or I wouldn't disturb 'em."

The answer was soon returned for him to be conducted up-stairs. So, ill at ease, and yet resolute, as it was in behalf of his friend, he followed the bell-boy to the private parlor, where he found them awaiting his arrival.

"Good-mornin'," he said, bowing very low, and forgetting the time of day in his embarrassment. "I come to see ye about me friend down there in the station-house."

Another man would have been more politic in his introduction, but Mike had never studied policy. Even Talleyrand himself never could have convinced him that "the use of words was to conceal thought." It was what had to be said, and he said it. He could not have made a more unfortunate beginning.

"Your friend!" exclaimed Mrs. Colonel Squealum DeCamp, straightening herself, and moving her chair a little nearer to that of her husband, as if for protection. "And what about your friend down there in the station-house?"

"He's an innocent man, mum, an' I come to see if I couldn't git him out."

"Innocent!" And the lady tossed her head with amazement at the impudence of any one who could apply that term to an individual who had surreptitiously unravelled the secret of her bureau-drawer and tooth-cup.

"Why do you say he's innocent?" asked Mr. DeCamp, calmly. "Do you know the circumstances of his arrest? He was discovered by my wife in the very act of hiding in the closet. Surely he must either be insane or else a thief; otherwise, what apology could he have for being in a lady's room under such circumstances?"

Mrs. DeCamp tossed her head and sniffed significantly, but said nothing.

"He was lookin' for a poor deceived young woman, sir, who ran away from her home last night. She was my wife, sir, poor guirl, an' took wid her our little Katie, the joy o' me loife. It was all because she was deceived by a bad man, who played the piane wid white fingers an' talked poetry beautiful loike."

As Mike unfolded his story, the gentleman, who was much more accustomed to weigh a question on its merits than the lady, was inclined to give it credence, though even then he could not see why the case should not be presented to the court and investigation legally made. Mrs. DeCamp, however, was not so easily persuaded. She had frequently read of just such cases as that of Michael's; she had even wept over them, and, laying down the book, had folded her hands, and, gazing on the sunset, had given herself up to pensive melancholy. She had, moreover, introduced into her best novel a similar instance; but these cases had always received a certain dignity and a sort of aristocratic interest from the fact that they had happened in the circle of dukes and duchesses. This was, to her mind, only a low story, and, even if it were true, the very fact that the prisoner had been associated with that class of people only made her all the more certain that he was a burglar, whatever

else he might profess. She reiterated again and again her conviction.

"No, Mr. DeCamp, I will not consent to a withdrawal of the charge, because I believe he is a guilty man. And I assure you, positively, that no amount of argument you can bring shall convince me to the contrary. I think I am of age, and I know my own mind."

Both of these propositions were true. Hans was undoubtedly guilty of the crime which she deemed most unpardonable, and she had been of age for over twenty years.

"Well," said her husband at length, turning toward Mike, "suppose we let it go on to trial in open court; if it is so easy to establish his good character, it can readily be done then. How will that do?"

"Well, I'd rather have it different if I could, sir," replied he, "because the reporters will all be there, an' I wouldn't loike the sin o' the poor guirl laid all open afore the world. Sure they'll have it all in the papers, sir, so they will."

Mrs. DeCamp pricked up her ears and looked a little worried. "Have it in the papers? Have what in the papers?" she asked, nervously. An amused expression played on the face of her husband, which fortunately she did not see.

"The whole of it, mum; they niver lave out nothin', thim reporters don't. An' axin' yer pardon, mum, I thought as how it moight not be exactly to your loikin' to have that in about that hair an' thim teeth what Hans was tellin' me about. He didn't go for to do it, mum, but he couldn't help it, ye know; for just when he was gettin' ready to run out when he see his mistake,

ye locked the door on him, not knowin' he was there, an' he couldn't do nothin' else but to wait. He's a very dacint man, mum, an' as bashful as a babby in the presence of foine ladies loike yerself; an' he couldn't bear to have it go out that he was in yer closet, loike that, widout tellin' all about it, mum."

She lifted her eyebrows and looked into vacancy with a troubled look, as people do when they are seeking to solve some perplexing problem. Then rising from her chair, she walked toward the window; as it was utterly dark without, she might with equal propriety have walked up to within six inches of the wall and have stood gazing at the paper. After a little time she appeared to awaken to the fact, and returned. "What did you say about this young woman?" she asked.

Mike repeated that portion of the story, and dwelt especially on the fact of Hans' great kindness to him on this and former occasions. When he had finished she turned to her husband, who had sat in a mood of quiet expectancy, tipped back in his chair, and said,—

"George, dear, what do you think of this? Doesn't it seem to you as though there was a good deal of probability that, after all, the poor man was innocent?"

"George, dear," had not been married all these years for naught. He knew the meaning of each peculiar inflection, of which there were at least four, one for every mood, and what was desired of him on each occasion. He was thoroughly acquainted, likewise, with the hidden significance of each separate term of affection. He had deciphered the whole alphabet, and become an adept in it during that first year of his hymeneal bliss, when he was endeavoring to bring Mrs. Colonel Squealum De-

Camp to the proper state of mind in which she should perceive the wisdom of making him the legal proprietor of her goods and estate. He knew that "George, dear," with the rising inflection, invariably called for unreserved indorsement. That, like most people who honor us with their confidence by seeking our counsel, what she really wanted was not his advice, but his approval; and while he was not quite so much of an adept in observing this sign alphabet as he once was, he was nevertheless ready to obey, even yet, whenever, as in this case, it would not interfere with the worship which he paid to his deity. in other words,—himself. So he assured her that there was no remaining shadow of a doubt in his mind that the poor man was entirely a victim of circumstances; and that, instead of being imprisoned, he ought rather, if anything, to be rewarded for his beautiful fidelity to his friends. He even offered to write a note to the proper authorities stating this fact, and expressing his regret at the unfortunate circumstances which had caused so innocent a man to be apprehended. With this in his pocket, therefore, Mike bowed himself out of their presence, scarcely knowing how politic he had been; having slain the foe by simply pulling the trigger of the gun which he could never have made or found, but which the enemy had unwittingly put into his hand.

It was certainly a great blessing, just at this juncture, that Mike was called upon to thus think and act in behalf of another. Ever and everywhere, the best antidote for our trouble is to try to help a brother out of his. Lay down this book, O brooding soul! Go out, and with determined effort, if need be, bring sunlight and some psalm of hope into another's dreary darkness: then

come back, and having learned its truth, mark this passage, that you may read it again on some one of those shadowed to-morrows which, in this changeful world, await us all.

The next morning, at as early an hour as he thought he could gain admission, he went to see Hans, and bear to him the tidings of his success. He found that individual with swollen eyes, having passed a night of sleeplessness and anxiety on account of the uncertainty of his fate. When he appeared with the officer and informed the prisoner that he had secured the written statement of the prosecuting parties that in their judgment he was innocent, and that the judge had therefore consented to release him, Hans, who had been swearing vengeance on everybody connected with his arrest, forgot all about his anger in his joy and gratitude.

"Michael, mine friend," he exclaimed, wabbling toward him and grasping his hand in both of his, "you are better as anybody to do dis business in der whole world around. Oh, mine friend, I feels so bad in here," placing his hand on his heart, "dot I vas so happy und you vas so sad."

As they were walking away, arm in arm, Hans said,—

"If I could get me avay from mine business, I vould follow dem ofer der ocean to help you find dem, Michael."

"I've been thinkin' o' that too," replied the other, "but I niver could be sure o' findin' 'em, even if I wint. An' I don't see how I could do that till I might sell out my little store; and the Lord knows I'd spind it all in seekin' 'em, wherever they might be, so I would. I've been tryin' to think how I could telegraph to her uncle,

an' git him to meet her ship whin it reaches Cork. Poor guirl, she ain't in her roight moind, or she niver would do this; an' I moight tell him so, an' ask him to forgive an' take her back, for the love o' Heaven. Leastwise, he moight influence her, for she took it awful bad whin he disowned her; an' she'll be pinitent, I know, by the toime she reaches the other side. An' that thief of an Italian could be arrested, an' I could go over myself, an' see that he was punished as he deserves an' that she was provided for in comfort. An' I could bring back my little Katie, an' could still have somethin' to live for, an' to love."

It was decided that before sending the telegram they should return to Jenkinstown and solicit the aid of one of his customers, an educated man, in preparing it. So that afternoon, with a heavy heart, Mike returned. He did not go to his old home, but remained all night with Hans, and after having made due arrangements, took the train the next morning for New York.

After he had arrived and had sent the despatch the awful sense of loneliness returned, as he walked up the crowded streets and realized that now nothing more could be done except to wait. To wait, day after day, and hour after hour; in the morning wishing it were night, and in the night wishing it were morning again; to wait, counting the grains of sand running through the hour-glass, measuring the shadow as it creeps inch by inch across the dial-plate; the mind, meantime, like some ponderous wheel in the mill, when forgotten by its owner, grinding away itself. Happy are ye who only have to work! Alas for those who must not work, but wait!

He strolled up to the office of the Neptune steamship

line, and asked the clerk at the desk how long it would be before the "Fire-Fly" would probably be heard from.

"From ten days to two weeks." Why did he not say, "eternity"?

He bought a paper in the street, but could not read it, and threw it away. Before he knew whither he went, he found himself on the wharf from whence the vessel had sailed the day before. The wind was blowing violently as he looked out to seaward. With a shudder he drew his coat about him, and retraced his steps. He passed back along the same streets through which he had driven, till he arrived at the hotel where they had stopped. He saw they recognized him there, and went out. The throngs were pressing up Broadway; he joined them, and tried to interest himself in the shop-windows. Hour after hour he walked, till he found himself at the Sixth Avenue entrance of the Central Park. He could hear the shouts of the skaters on the pond. Ladies and gentlemen, heavily muffled in furs, glided gayly past him, the music of the bells chiming in with their merry laughter. Leaving them, he passed down the avenue again. A little child stood looking wistfully in at a confectioner's window. A red knit hood was on her head; her shoes were almost gone; but though her garments spoke of poverty, they were neat and clean, and showed that some mother out of her penury was seeking to atone, by love, for the lack of comforts which she could not buy. Mike took her with him into the store, and bought her some candies in pretty cornucopias. Then he went with her and purchased some shoes; and when she looked up wonderingly and thanked him, it seemed as though he

wanted to speak, but could not; and he only pressed her hand and hurried away. He stopped at a news-stand and bought another paper; he could not read it, and was about to cast it aside as he had the other, when he chanced to glance over the boarding-house advertisements. Slipping the paper into his pocket, he went in search of one; it would at least occupy his time. No one noticed him as he walked onward; in the great city he was as thoroughly alone as if he had been in the desert of Sahara. Those who glanced casually at him only saw one of those same men whom we meet every day, reader. There was nothing exceptional about him save his height; only such an ordinary Irishman as you will elbow against to-morrow in your walk down-town. No one would ever have thought, and least of all himself, of his being introduced into a novel. A common life? Call thou not any life common! God pity that man or woman who can stop to think of the grammar of a moan, or fail to recognize in this world of ours the dignity of the commonplace. Eighteen hundred years ago there came from out Gethsemane the groan of a crushed heart; and the world can never forgive itself that it failed to hear that cry which fell from the lips of only a poor peasant.

After that, Mike found himself every day going over the same route, between his temporary boarding-place and the wharf from whence the ship had sailed. It was as near as he could come to her for whom he had lived all these years, and his little child. The waves rolling up against the logs seemed somehow to bring a message to him from them, and sometimes he fancied he could catch a sound like a sob of penitence. Then with a sigh he would return again to his room, and in the afternoon

repeat the same walk once more. He did not try to read now; sitting before his fire he would think, or, rising, walk the room, or perhaps try to forget it all in sleep, and often try in vain.

One day as he stood by the wharf he saw a steamer arrive; the "Alexandria." He noticed that a great crowd were gathered at the pier; that many wept aloud as they fell into each other's arms. He heard them asking many questions in excited tones, and they who tried to answer them would break into tears again, and then be led away by loving friends. He saw one old man tear his hair and wring his hands, and then place his palm upon his heart as though in agony. He longed to help him, but he scarcely dared to try, because, though he seemed alone and friendless, he was a man of higher station than he; and while Michael stood pitying him, and longing to aid, the gentleman stepped into his carriage and was driven away. He went home troubled and perplexed. He could not understand why friends should weep when meeting, except for joy. The next day he went down to the office of the line. "When shall we hear o' the 'Fire-Fly'?" he asked. "When she reaches Cork, or shall we have to wait till she arrives at Liverpool?"

"Good gracious, man, we've heard of the 'Fire-Fly' already," was the answer.

"What have you heard? Has anything happened?" exclaimed Mike, thoroughly startled.

"Why, the 'Fire-Fly' was burned two days out at sea, and the passengers who were saved—and there were only a few—were brought back by the 'Alexandria,' yesterday. They arrived in quarantine the day before, and it was all in yesterday morning's papers."

"And have you the list o' the saved?" reaching over and grasping his arm.

"Yes; who do you want to inquire about?"

"There was a Mr. and Mrs.—Porta on board, wid a little guirl."

"Yes, there were," answered the other, looking hastily at his list. "She was lost; but the father and child were rescued, and landed yesterday. They were picked up in a small boat, with seventeen others."

"Landed yesterday? Oh, my God! An' I was there, an' the Lord knows where they are now. An' she dead! My poor Maggie dead! Burned away off at sea, where I couldn't help her! An' my little Katie close near me, an' I didn't know it! Oh, my God, my God!" He staggered forth, blinded and crazed with grief, scarcely knowing whither he went.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### PORTA'S FLIGHT.

AMONG the passengers on board the "Alexandria" that day was one who peered anxiously, and yet furtively, over the multitude of faces gathered on the wharf. He stood behind the others, who were pushing forward to catch the glance of friends; moved restlessly from one side of the steamer to the other, and led by the hand a little girl. It was Signor Antonio Porta. His fingers worked nervously, and twice he stopped and whispered to the child to remain very quiet, and utter not a word,

and he would take her to her papa. Some of the passengers appeared a little surprised to see him on the deck, for it had been given out that he and his daughter were both dangerously ill, and were able to see no one in their state-room except the physician.

Suddenly, while he was thus scanning from his unobserved position the crowd gathered below, his swarthy face changed color, the fingers twitched more than they had before, and he stealthily led the child to the other end of the ship. Then it was he had seen Mike, and, expecting that he had heard the news of the burning of the vessel and of the rescue, concluded that he was there to claim revenge. For a few moments he scarcely knew what course to pursue. He was a man, however, to remain cool under all circumstances, and, barring the slight indications above mentioned, no one could have guessed that he was greatly excited.

He passed down into the cabin. In one corner were a number of old garments which had been found in the chests picked up in the vicinity of the sunken ship. These chests had either floated away of themselves, or perhaps had been cast over as life-preservers and at last been abandoned by those who had clung to them until hope had gone. The garments had been taken out and dried, and left as part of the unclaimed property. It was an easy matter for him to appropriate a suit for himself and another for the child. If he could disguise himself enough to once get safely beyond the wharf, he thought he might escape. He was not entirely without money, for he had had sufficient time to secure that from the burning ship; thus he could start immediately for the West. His original intention had been to go to an

obscure quarter of New York, and, leaving the child in some place of safe retreat, telegraph Mike where she might be found, after having himself left the city. So keen, however, was his sense of the dangerous position he now occupied, that he determined to abandon that plan and adopt another. He would leave at once, if he could but escape detection, and from some distant point send word to her father of her whereabouts; after which he could easily depart whither he would. True, he might have saved the expense and trouble of taking her with him by abandoning her in the city. But, bad as he was, he was not wholly bad; no man ever is. He had, moreover, come to regard her with a certain feeling of passing tenderness on account of her motherless position, and that mother's last word to him. The fire had occurred at night, and she, being very sick, like most of the passengers, had been so badly burned that she could not be removed.

"I've sinned, Antonio," she gasped. "God forgive me and have mercy on my poor soul; but do not let the little one suffer because of that sin. See that she is returned to her father. Poor Mike! Poor Mike! Get word to him that I died sorry for my sin and asked his pardon." These were her last words; the vessel was rapidly sinking, and Porta had just time to hurry away with Katie, having answered with emotion,—

"God help me, I will."

It was with considerable nervous trepidation that he started to go down the plank, leading by his side the child, as thoroughly disguised as possible. Of course, as the reader knows, he passed through the crowd without any trouble except from the reporters, who gathered

about him, pencil and paper in hand, soliciting an interview. He breathed freer as the train swept out of the depot and he realized that every moment was bearing him swiftly away from the scene of danger. They journeyed on all that day, and on the following morning reached the city of Groveland, a large city in one of the Western States. Here they stopped for rest, Katie having grown very weary. The next day they continued their journey on one of the smaller roads leading out of the town, to a little inland village by the name of Belleville. Being situated on a river and surrounded by beautiful woods, it had become a kind of fashionable summer resort for the denizens of Groveland. Few more dreary or forsaken places could be found than this little inland town in winter.

"Here I will be safe," thought Porta; "and after a few days in which to rest and perfect my plans, I can send the despatch and pursue my journey unmolested."

The hotel at which he stopped was kept by a crusty old man and a nervous old woman. It was not one of the larger houses: they were closed till the next season; but a small, stunted-looking inn, which remained open all the year round because the proprietor was too shiftless to find other work in winter, and so consumed at that season whatever had been saved during the summer.

Having completed his plans, after a few days Porta determined to leave. He did not take the trouble to settle his account, but stated to the landlord that he was called out of town for a short time, and would return for his little girl within a week.

"Barney will be so glad to see her again," he said to himself, "that he will find no fault with the bill."

On the way down to the station he stopped to telegraph the message to Mike. He wrote in a clear, legible hand,—

"Come immediately and take care of your child."

At first he signed his own name, and then threw the blank away. That would not do: it might in some way lead to discovery; they might telegraph for his arrest. While there was not much danger, it was, nevertheless, safer to affix another signature. He finally decided to sign that of the lady at the hotel. So the despatch was sent,—

"Come immediately and take care of your child.
"MRS. FELIX,
"Belleville, Ohio."

Unfortunately, in that same State there was a Jenkinstown. In his hurry to catch the train—for he was a little late, and that was the only opportunity for leaving town that day—he had neglected to designate the particular Jenkinstown to which the message was to go. As was very natural, therefore, the operator sent it to the one which was near at hand.

Now, Barney is not a very uncommon name among the Irish, and neither is Michael. So that when the telegram arrived it did not lie in the drawer of the office desk, as the reader has doubtless anticipated that it would: it found a resting-place in the hands of Mrs. Michael Barney of the wrong Jenkinstown, when the husband and lawful owner of that title was, as she sup-

posed, industriously pursuing his avocation of Jack-of-all-trades at the village store.

He was a peaceably-inclined man, little in stature, and appeared to even greater disadvantage in that respect on account of the large and muscular proportions of Mrs. Barney. If the message had come earlier in the day, she would have had more time for her surprise and anger to have abated; and would have probably, therefore, dealt more leniently with her other half when he returned to his home. Fate decreed, however, that it should come just as the clock was striking six; the very hour when he was expected, according to his daily custom, to arrive from the store. The ordinary occurrences in the little village were scarcely striking enough to afford nutriment for the mind of an active woman of curiosity, and so Mrs. Barney, like many of her kind in isolated sections, was accustomed to magnify to their utmost proportions whatever events of a possibly startling nature interrupted the pellucid flow of Jenkinstown society.

To receive a telegraphic despatch was something quite out of the current of her ordinary life; and such an occasion could not be permitted to pass without being duly improved. She gave a little scream, therefore, and caught her breath, laying down the scrubbing-brush, and almost overturning the pailful of black water all over the floor, as she threw up her hands, without rising from her knees. Never but once before had she been thus honored by being selected from among the great mass of forgotten womankind that she might become the recipient of a telegraphic announcement directed to her very self; that was at the decease of her mother, and she could

scarcely now expect anything less startling than a death in the family at least. To most of us there is a certain pleasure in excitement, even though it be nothing more than the prospect of a lively wake.

"It's for Mike," said the boy.

She grasped the envelope and tore it open with eager hand. The carrier did not tarry after having assisted her to decipher it, as he had other messages to deliver. Perhaps it was fortunate for him that he did not, for among the few little shortcomings of Mike's helpmeet she was possessed of a violent temper, which, when fully aroused, did not stop to discriminate as to the reasonable course to be pursued, but, like the baited bull, levelled its horns at the first object of attack which presented itself.

She certainly had no cause to complain that the missive lacked any of the elements of a capital excitement. Her eyes grew larger and her features more firmly set with each repeated reading:

"MR. MICHAEL BARNEY:

"Come immediately and take care of your child.

"MRS. FELIX,

"Belleville, Ohio."

"Ah, the villain!" at last she exclaimed, when she had sufficiently recovered from her first surprise to be able to exclaim anything. "Mrs. Felix is it? Um-m-m-m-m-m-m!" winking one eye deliberately and slowly clawing at her apron.

"I'll Mrs. Felix ye, my foine boy! An' here I bin married to ye, a true an' lawful wife, these twinty year

come nixt May, an' some Mrs. Felix sindin' for ye to come an' take care o' your choild! That's where all yer money's gone to, is it? An' me slavin' an' killin' myself wid work that Mrs. Felix may sind for ye to come an' take care o' your choild! Um-m-m-m-m-m-m!" working her lips, and again clawing at her apron.

It was at this unlucky moment, when the burning fuse, as it were, had just reached the dynamite, that Mike arrived on the steps of his domicile. A military company had been formed not a great while before in the village, ostensibly as a home guard, but in reality as a means of furnishing the individuals concerned an opportunity to march and countermarch in fine clothes before the admiring gaze of friends and neighbors, and feel heroic. As there was very little in the village to guard, and nobody to be guarded against, there was found no lack of rustic braves to join the martial host. Of this company Mike was a member, and this was the day when they had just secured their guns and uniforms. The afternoon had been spent at the drill-room, and as they were to assemble again in the evening, it was decided that each recruit should wear his soldierly apparel home, that the several households represented might partake as much as possible of the heroic spirit. Mike also brought home his musket. That portion of the uniform which delighted him most, however, was the tall hat. He had been born of small parents, and their height, or rather their lack of it, was the only legacy they had left him. This had troubled him many times, as he was quite slender withal, and his *personnel* was accordingly slight, not to say insignificant. But as he had surveyed himself at the drill-room in this hat, it had been with a

touch of satisfaction regarding his appearance which he had never before experienced. Of course the ubiquitous small boys of the town crowded about him as he walked home, but he having thus recently fallen into the possession of dignity, and as yet scarcely having become accustomed to greatness, only frowned on them and walked very straight, feeling quite like Wellington at the battle of Waterloo. He actually wished, in a nebulous kind of a way, that some Indians might appear from behind the trees, and fancied himself bearing home their scalps victoriously.

It was in this state of martial glory, with the admiring juveniles at his heels, that he arrived at the threshold of his own home. Mrs. Barney heard his footstep while still on her knees clawing her apron, the last expression, with the feline emphasis, having scarcely died away.

"Sweet is revenge; especially to woman,"

says Byron. The moment of sweet revenge was now at hand, and Mrs. Barney was not the one to let any of its nectar escape. She quickly arose from her knees, and, seizing the pailful of water unimproved, with which she had been scrubbing the floor, awaited his approach, like an ancient Amazon before the Greeks. Her limbs were firmly set one before another, her head and shoulders thrown back, and the pail balanced effectively in her two hands.

The door swung open and Mike entered. But he did not advance very far. For a moment he thought the roof had fallen in about him, leaving him exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and that a rain-storm of

ice-water had been ordered by Providence in midwinter. The aqueous volley had struck him fairly in the face, and, running down under his collar, had caused that sudden muscular contraction of the diaphragm which results in a series of short, quick breathings, and which has led most of us at times to become fully convinced that life after all was not worth living.

As already stated, his first thought was in reference to the inclemency of the weather; his second thought was, that the farther he was removed from the scene of the catastrophe the more it would conduce to his happiness and peace of mind. He flung aside his musket, with which he had recently been so desirous of killing an Indian, and turned to flee. Before sufficient time had elapsed for his thought to be converted into action, he came to the further conclusion that not only had the roof proven insecure, but the walls had fallen in, and the timbers were coming into very painful collision with his head. He found himself, moreover, hindered in his escape by something jerking him back, and fancied that one of the lamp fixtures had perhaps become entangled in his collar, leaving him hopelessly exposed to the falling débris.

"I'll Mrs. Felix ye!" shouted his spouse, as she jerked him about the room with her brawny grasp, thundering repeated blows with the empty bucket upon his head. "I'll teach ye to receive tilegraphic despatches for ye to come an' take care o' your choild. That's where ye've bin, is it, whin ye tould me ye were becomin' a soldier? Um-m-m-m-m-m-m!"

The admiring boys outside, peering through the open door, and now gathering around it, began to shout "Hoo-

ray!" "Go in, Lemons!" "Oh, see him spin!" and other expressions of a similar nature, not at all flattering to the soldierly qualities of the home guard.

It was fully two minutes before Mike awakened to the fact that his tribulations arose not from any lack of structural strength in the house, but from an overplus of that quality in the housekeeper. He felt like remonstrating with her, and asking her if this was respectful treatment toward one whom she had promised at the altar to love, honor, and obey. Not that he formulated these sentiments exactly,—such a process would have required more time than he felt he had at his disposal. It was rather a moment for action than ideas; but his first emotion was of that indignant type which would doubtless have found expression in some such reasonable questionings, if the hour had been propitious. As it was, however, this was soon followed by a stronger feeling of resentment, culminating in a determination for revenge.

Alas, what a strange being is man! In aspirations, infinite; in achievements, infinitesimal! Thus was it with poor Mike. He aimed one blow at his spouse, which would surely have caused an extravagant doctor's bill had it taken effect, but which, as she dexterously dodged it, only resulted in causing him to throw himself into her arms, utterly helpless before her superior strength.

"Give it to him, ol' 'oman!" "Save the peelin's!" "Hoo-ray for the home guard!" burst simultaneously from the juvenile spectators. Mrs. Barney seeing them at length, started after them, but not until she had, with one supreme paroxysm of escaping wrath, shot Mike into a corner, where he fell in most unsoldierly attitude. The

THE HOME GUARD DOES NOT EXACTLY MEET AN INDIAN, BUT WISHES HE HAD.
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boys, cheering vociferously, ran hurriedly into the street as she approached; and when she had shut and locked the door, they still manifested their interest in the case by rapping at the windows and then scampering away.

By the time she had returned Mike had recovered his feet, and stood with knuckles extended in an attitude of manly self-defence. She assumed a position in the centre of the room, with her arms akimbo.

"So it's Mrs. Felix that's tilegraphin' you to come an' take care o' your choild, is it?" she asked, nodding her head emphatically with every word.

"Come on!" he roared, "come on!" shaking his fists and dancing round her, having reached the firm conclusion that he had a crazy woman to deal with, and that valor was the only course to pursue.

"Um-m-m-m-m-m-m!" she exclaimed, with the feline rise and fall, winking one eye knowingly, and again slowly nodding her head.

"Come on!" he roared again, "come on!" still maintaining the manly attitude of self-defence, and continuing his gyrations.

Mrs. Barney's fury had now quite expended itself, and like most angry women under such circumstances, she began to cry. "It's foine treatmint ye're givin' me, after these twinty years of slavin' an' toilin' to kape yer home dasint, an' you runnin' away wid Mrs. Felix."

"It's crazy ye are intirely," he answered, rubbing his head. "What do I know about any Mrs. Felix? An' who is it that's bin givin' the foine tratemint, I'd loike to know?"

"Read that!" she said, casting the crumpled despatch at his feet, and throwing up her apron to her eyes.

"Read that, an' thin tell me if that's the way to treat a poor, weak, and helpless guirl that ye took away from her home, an' who's bin a lovin' an' affectionate wife to ye all these years?" She sat down in a chair, and, with her apron still up at her eyes, rocked to and fro, moaning and breaking into convulsive sobs.

"Who writ this?" he asked.

"An' who should write it but Mrs. Felix, an' her own name signed there, an' me a true an' lovin' wife for twinty year come next May."

Mike protested emphatically; but Mrs. Barney was not to be convinced so easily. With her, as with most narrow people, one powerful emotion would nullify a thousand reasons. Moreover, such an occasion was of too rare occurrence for it to be permitted to pass away until all the saccharine juices had been economically extracted. Only after he had promised to accompany her during the following week to Belleville, which was not far distant from Jenkinstown, would she entertain any thought of either compromise or treaty.

When the landlady of the little inn, therefore, a few days later, saw a couple coming up the walk, she concluded that her winter's trade was improving, and came to the door with the customary reception smile. It quickly faded, however, when the parties showed her the despatch and asked if she was the author of the same. Her indignation knew no bounds when, after putting on her bonnet and accompanying them to the office, the fact was discovered that her boarder, whom she had treated as a very distinguished personage, had sent the message, and after signing her name had gone out of town.

"He signed another name first," said the operator,

"but seemed to change his mind, and then he wrote that despatch which you have."

"What was the name he signed?" inquired the landlady.

"I don't remember what it was now," he answered. "I may find the paper in the basket, though," looking over the contents of that receptacle. After fumbling for some time he took it out and read it.

"Here it is:—Porta; Antonio Porta."

"Did he sign his name that?" exclaimed she. "He called himself Signor Bontanti when at the house."

They returned to the hotel, and summoned Katie before them. Her plump, happy little face appeared to make an impression on the woman from Jenkinstown, and she took her in her arms and kissed her.

Mrs. Felix, however, was above any such weakness. She looked on all children as womankind in general are accustomed to regard spiders,—created expressly as pests to housekeepers, and for the purpose of "making work." As the possibility dawned, therefore, of having Katie domiciled in their house, it was with a stern and angry countenance that she regarded her, saying nothing, however, of a direct nature, lest it might ultimately prove that her uncle, or whoever he was, should return, in which case she would not wish to have aroused any sentiment which should cause his niece to manifest dislike toward her in his presence. He certainly appeared like an aristocratic gentleman, and no one knew how much custom he might be able to influence.

One might have wondered, when looking on Katie, how any woman could have helped loving so sweet and innocent a child. True, other children have had just as

round, dimpled little faces as that which, from out its golden frame of clustering curls, smiled trustfully into the big buxom face of Mrs. Barney.

"You're a schwate little darlin'," exclaimed that bulky compound of opposite impulses and emotions, hugging her and kissing her again. The cloud of the last few days was lifted from her horizon, and she was now consequently in the best of humor. Perhaps she was more easily touched with tenderness from the fact of her own two sturdy urchins at home; for though they were the pest of the neighborhood, and seemed fit for nothing but the prize-ring, with their big bullet heads and closely-shaven fiery red hair, they were the veriest Cupids to her, when she chanced to be in the Cupid mood herself, as she was at present. At other times they were little fiends, and she treated them accordingly. Whatever they seemed to be, however, she was certainly better for having had them; as we all are, praise God! Speak of the debt of gratitude they owe to us? What does it weigh when compared with the debt of gratitude we owe to them? Israel was not the only people led out of the darkness of Egypt as the result of a child's cry.

"Do you like her?" asked Katie, pointing her little finger to Mrs. Felix.

"Och, would ye hear the little jewel!" shouted Mrs. Barney, bursting into a loud laugh. "Do I loike her? Of course I loike her. I loike all nice folks, an' so of course I loike her," lying, like the rest of the world, for the sake of politeness at the expense of conscience.

"I don't," chattered the child. "She speaks cross, and I think she's awful homely. She ain't a bit as my mamma was; my mamma was lovely."

Mrs. Felix had never had any children; she called them "little brats." As the child spoke these words she did not look as though there was any danger of her altering her opinion.

After the conversation had continued for some time longer, and Katie had been thoroughly catechised, and the information had been gained that her "mamma had gone down in a big boat in the ocean," and that her "papa was going to meet her here and take her home again," and that Mr. Porta, *alias* Mr. Bontanti, was her uncle, "'cause he told her so," Mrs. Barney said,—

"Well, I'd be thinkin' we moight be goin' home now. Come, Mickey, or we'll be late for the train."

The home guard arose, and, after wishing Mrs. Felix "the top o' the mornin'," trotted out by the side of his wife.

When they had departed, Mr. Felix, who had been listening outside the door, came in and said,—

"Well?"

"I should think it was 'well,'" replied his spouse. "Here we are with a rascal who has been boarding with us for three weeks and never payin' a cent, and then after cutting up some absurd didos goes and jumps the town, and leaves us with a spoiled youngster on our hands; a pert little nobody-knows-who. What am I to do with her in this town? I know. I'll send her to the poor-house, so I will; or if I keep her, I'll take the nonsense out of her."

She looked as though she would, and break her heart besides. As she stood there, with her skinny frame and her bony fingers, her little gray eyes set back in her head and striking fire, she looked like the devil's wife. God

deliver us from a diabolic person, anyway; but of the two, God deliver us from a diabolic woman. Is it because the pinnacle on which she stands is so much higher than a man's that when she falls she strikes so far below him?

When another week had gone and no one had arrived to claim the little waif, it was determined to send her to the county-house. So she was bundled up and driven thither, to be duly delivered into the hands of those who would feed her on so many ounces of meal per day, and then, if she died, sell to the neighboring college of doctors, to be cut up for scientific purposes,—the little form that a mother had nursed and fondled, that a father had smiled upon so many times, as he kissed those lips which, to him, were the sweetest in all the world. Admittance could not be procured for her there, however; the house was full, and, moreover, as she was not a resident of the county, there was a question of eligibility concerned. So she was taken back again; and since there was now no other place where she could be sent, Mrs. Felix concluded to let her remain, and to make what use of her she could.

"I want my papa," Katie cried, as the woman came into the room where she had been left during the conference, and bade her, in a sharp, shrill tone, to "take off them things." "I want to go home; I don't want to stay here any longer." And she laid her little head on the sofa and began to cry.

"Uh!" exclaimed the woman, with a gesture of impatience; and stepping hurriedly over to where the little one stood, she lifted her thin hand like a claw, and gave her a blow on the side of her face which threw her to the floor.

"I'll teach you to answer back, you little huzzy!" she cried. "You just take off them things an' foller me; an' see that you be quick about it, too."

It was new treatment for this tender plant, which had been during those happy years of her little life shielded from every ill by the great, noble heart of Mike. She did not understand it at first, and did not comply as quickly as the woman thought she should.

"Come along!" cried she, as she seized her by her wrist, and, lifting her from the floor by one arm, carried her out of the room shrieking with pain. "There! Stand there," she continued, when she had taken her into her bedroom. "You're the worst child I ever see. I'll give you to the big black man, and he will eat you up."

Katie endeavored to stop crying immediately on hearing this threat, for she had never been told a lie in her life, and believed all that was said to her. She trembled with horror at such a thought, and though she could not overcome at once the sense of grief and pain, and her breath would catch involuntarily in short stifled sobs, she tried to quiet them as best she could. Mrs. Felix noticed this effect of her threatenings, and laid away her acquired knowledge for future use.

Then taking the scissors from her workstand, she cut off, one by one, the ringlets which had formed a mother's and a father's pride, and threw them into the scuttle.

"These gewgaws won't do for such as you now," she remarked, removing the ribbon from her neck, which until this time she had permitted Jane, the maid of all work, to adorn her with, not knowing but that even yet

the absentee might return. At last, however, things had come to a crisis, and she was determined to introduce a new régime. She took off her pretty little plaid dress, and put on one which she had found in her bundle, and which had been ruined in the wreck.

"Foller me," she said. "There's a great bear under that bed, and he'll tear you all in pieces if he finds you alone in this room."

Katie ran and kept close at her side. She led the way into the kitchen, and said to Jane,—

"Give this gell somethin' to do; and mind," she added, turning toward the child, "if I catch you not doin' what you're told, I'll let in a great big black man that I keep for just such naughty little girls as you be, and he'll put you right into a great big kettle of boiling water." Katie made no reply, but only drew nearer to the girl who had proved a friend to her and gained her love.

As Mrs. Felix passed out, Jane whispered to the child,—

"Don't you mind that old devil. She lies; she ha'n't got no black man; an' I won't let him hurt you nohow." Jane, who had not had the advantages of a school, except for one winter term, had never looked into the mysteries of Whately. Logic was not her strong point.

"Come, little dear," she continued; "just you wipe these knives: that won't be hard; an' when you get tired, I'll let you sit down; but when you hear her comin' just you get up an' run; an' stand by me, an' make out that you ha'n't left off work a minute."

"I'm awful afraid of that black man," whispered Katie, after a few minutes. "And she has a big bear

under her bed, too; and if I ever go in there alone he will eat me up."

Jane tried in vain to quiet her fears by assuring her that it was not true; the image of terror had taken full possession of her imagination, and when the voice of Mrs. Felix was heard up-stairs calling for the girl to come to her, the child trembled and clung to her skirts, pleading with her not to leave her.

When evening arrived at last and she was sent to bed, she felt afraid to sleep in the great front room alone, where she had been accustomed to remain. She would have asked to be allowed to have Jane with her, but she did not dare. She soon discovered, however, that that was not to be her chamber any longer.

"You come up with me," said Mrs. Felix, as she led the way to a room in the garret; "an' see you don't set nothin' on fire, after I leave the candle for you to undress by. I'll be up here again in a few minutes, an' mind you get undressed by the time I come for that light, or it'll be the worse for you."

When she was left alone, the babe (for only such she was), trying with her little cold fingers to unfasten her garments, and trembling with fear, cried piteously all alone to herself. She was not old enough to reason, but in a blind, dumb way felt that somehow God, to whom she had always been taught to pray, could help her; she had never gone to bed without that prayer, and so in the cold she knelt down now, and asked him to take her home again.

The step of Mrs. Felix on the stair made her spring from her knees with fear, and bound partly dressed into bed.

"Are you all undressed?" asked that female lynx, looking around.

"Yes, marm," replied Katie.

She did not mean to lie. We often make our children liars by our angry threats. The woman turned down the coverlid, and saw that she was partly dressed.

"Oh, you awful little liar!" she cried, striking her a blow on one side of her face; "do you know that all liars will go to hell, and be burned up for ever and ever? And you're goin' there; an' just as soon as I go downstairs I'll send up that black man to eat you up, so I will."

The child, in hysterical sobs, plead with her for mercy, as she stood in the cold, while the woman was roughly removing her garments.

"I didn't mean to; but my fingers were cold, and I couldn't undress quick enough; and when I heard you coming I was afraid, and jumped into bed with my clothes on."

Mrs. Felix consented this time not to send him up, but made all sorts of terrible threats in case of further delinquency.

"Now be still, and go to sleep right away, or the rats will come after you," she said, as she took the light and went out.

Katie heard her going down the stairs with a kind of unutterable despair. She listened until she could hear her no longer, then trembling with terror she lay quite still, with her heart pounding, fearful even to breathe aloud lest the rats should find her out. A thousand images of horror surrounded her; the winter's wind sighed mournfully without, shaking the old tree which

stood near the house, and causing the spreading branches to scratch against the window-pane. She fancied it was the black man trying to climb into her room. She would have shrieked for some one to come and save her, but she did not dare. She would have fled, groping in the darkness for Jane, though she knew she was afar off, down-stairs in the kitchen, but she thought she might fall into his arms. Then she actually heard a rat gnawing at the wood-work in the corner. Cold chills crept over her. For a moment he ceased, and she thought she could hear him now crossing the floor toward her bed.

Alas! alas! for the Indian torture which is going on in your homes every day, ye who read these words. Think what it means when you have only one impending terror haunting you day and night. Remember how you lay awake, and tossed through the weary hours, when there seemed to threaten you the single spectre of financial ruin. How the head throbbed, and all to-morrow appeared like one great yawning chasm, as though hell had opened, and you with staggering feet were plunging in: not a real terror, for it was not real; the ruin did not come; but it seemed real to you. And all your strength of reason and matured powers of mind could not banish that spectre from your presence.

What mean ye, then, when ye take an innocent, unsuspecting little child, with reason all immature, and imagination to lend reality to every dream, and people that child's life with not one terror but a thousand? Do you know what I would do to you, ye who persist in this thing, if I were emperor? I would have you fastened to the cart's tail and whipped publicly through

the streets. You want to teach your child to be good, forsooth! What irony! And so you tell lies, or permit some ignorant servant-girl to do it, of rats, and bears, and what-not. Do you not know that only base character can grow out of base motives; that the nobler the motive to which appeal is made, the loftier will be the type of man or woman which results?

How long she lay there she knew not. Not very long, as the clock goes; but the clock does not know how to reckon time during some experiences. Ages had passed away in that child's existence when she heard a footstep stealing stealthily into the room. She could bear it no longer, for she had heard such strange sounds all the evening. She uttered a sharp, stifled cry of agony.

"Don't be afraid, darlin'," a voice said, in a low tone; "it's only Jane. I wanted to scratch her eyes out when I saw her bringin' you up here all alone; but it wouldn't do to say nothin', you know, 'cause it might only make her mad, an' then I might not be able to help you any more. We mustn't speak loud, 'cause she might hear us, an' send me into my own room again; but I'd come back as soon as she went away. I would, if she killed me for it. How cold you are!" crawling in beside her, snuggling up close, and kissing her cheek. "Now go to sleep; don't be afraid; Jane won't let anything happen to you; good-night." It seemed like the voice of an angel to the tired child. She drew a long sigh.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come!" she said. "Good-night."

She laid her little chubby hand trustfully in that of her friend, and, with the other resting upon the pillow,

the drooping eyelids closed, and in a few moments she was asleep.

Rest peacefully, little one; this is a hard world, and thy baby feet seem scarcely fitted for the journey.

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## CHAPTER V.

MRS. FELIX EXPERIENCES PHYSICAL PROSTRATION, ACCOMPANIED BY AN OPTICAL ILLUSION, CAUSING HER TO SEE STARS.

THE next day was the Sabbath. Very early in the morning Jane awoke, and crept out of bed with as little noise as possible, that she might not disturb the slumberer beside her. Katie stirred a little and opened her eyes, but when the other whispered, "Go to sleep, darlin'; it's only Jane," she lay quite still, and soon her steady breathing gave assurance that she slept again. Then the girl stooped gently and kissed her cheek, but so softly that it seemed to Katie, as she dreamed, as if some child spirit, just starting on its upward journey, had tarried for a moment to smile on her, and say,—

"Good-by; I will soon return for you."

After that, she stepped softly into her own room.

"I can get some sleep afore the old 'oman comes, anyhow," she muttered to herself; "an' if she should mouse up to spy around she won't be any wiser for it. Leave that little thing alone in that 'ere room? Not if I knows it, Mrs. Felix."

She did not sleep very long; "for," she said, as she

hastily dressed, "if that wiper hears me around, she won't be so likely to get up herself, an' then perhaps the child will be let to sleep longer."

And now the light began to dawn, and the sun to shine into the little attic room. The wind had ceased during the night, and though the snow lay everywhere, the day seemed just fitted for a bright and beautiful and holy Sabbath of delight. Even Jane, despite her mutterings, worked more cheerfully than she was wont. Was it entirely because of the sunshine without, or because of the consciousness of having performed a kind deed when it really cost some self-denial? Whatever it was, she did not stop to either ask or answer; the analysis of experiences and motives, that which turns the dreariest commonplace life into a romance, which changes the level moorland into a battle-field, where the most momentous of human conflicts are waged and won or lost, she knew nothing of. She only knew that she felt happier than she had for a long time; and as she went about her work, humming a tune to herself, she looked out of the window, and attributed it all to the sunshine.

She had a calm conscience, moreover; a fact which may to some people seem a little strange, when they have become acquainted with a circumstance which happened immediately after she had arisen. When she first came down-stairs that morning it was still dark.

"If I make an awful racket," she muttered to herself, "I'll not only let the old 'oman know I'm up, but I'll wake her up so thoroughly that when she does go to sleep again she'll sleep on for a bit. She can't get up now, 'cause it ain't light, an' so she'll turn over an' lie all the longer."

She very quietly provided herself with a tin pan full of potatoes. Then she placed the coal-scuttle near the door which opened directly from the kitchen into Mrs. Felix's bedroom. Feeling now that all was ready, seizing the potatoes, she dashed them with all her strength on the bare floor. They rolled in every direction; the pan rattling and thumping, receiving some vigorous assistance meanwhile from Jane's foot.

"Oh, la sakes! what have I done?" she shouted, loud enough to thoroughly arouse the Felixes to a sense of some awful catastrophe.

Simultaneously there came a sudden scream and a gruff growl from the other room, while the rustle of bedclothes and the slapping of bare feet against the floor could be distinctly heard: a sign which the girl rightly interpreted to signify that her mistress was assuming a perpendicular position *instanter*.

"Oh, what have I done?" she shouted again, giving the tin pan another kick.

By this time the door was opened and Mrs. Felix came running in, inquiring in sharp tones what was the matter. Her husband's gruff voice could also be heard joining in the inquest, thrusting his night-capped head as far out as he could.

The small candle which Jane had placed on the shelf gave forth a very dim light, and his wife, forgetful of the fact that she was barefooted, rushed in, without taking sufficient precaution as to her course and the obstacles which might beset her. Nature, however, never has any favorites. If a person, even if she possesses all the delicate charms of Mrs. Felix herself, runs against a coal-scuttle, the laws of nature will never re-

move it. She simply lets it stand; and if the coal-scuttle does not give way, then the person running against it must. This was the case with Mrs. Felix: she gave way; and when she sought once more to assume an upright position, she found that her nearest possible approach to it was an obtuse angle skipping about on one of its legs.

"What do you mean by this uproar, you young huzzy!" she cried, with an exclamation of pain; for a moment setting down her wounded member that she might give chase to Jane, and then with another shriek resuming her former graceful position, and cushioning her foot in both hands. "Didn't you know better than to drop that pan o' potatoes, an' wake us up out o' a sound sleep as though the house was afire, an' leave that thing there for me to fall into?"

"I didn't mean for to do it, mum," persisted Jane, with an innocent air. "I was just bringin' 'em in to peel for breakfast, an' they slipped out o' my hand, mum."

"Well, you let 'em slip in again; an' mind you don't disturb us any more. Do you hear?"

"Yes, do you hear?" chimed in the gruff voice of the man, who now ventured to reach out his arm far enough to shake his fist.

"Yes'm," replied Jane, meekly, as she proceeded to remove the débris.

"Here it is not yet mornin', an' you wakin' us up by your clatter an' carelessness!" continued the irate mistress. "Now don't you make any more noise; an' don't you have breakfast till half-past eight o'clock. An' if you get done your work before then, don't you set down

an' fold your hands like a lazy thing, either; you can find enough to do if you want to."

"Yes, you lazy thing!" echoed the gruff voice.

Mrs. Felix now made her way into her room, though at a much slower pace than that at which she had issued from the same. Using one foot and the heel of the other, she hobbled back like a rheumatic practising gymnastics, muttering indistinct threatenings of vengeance upon Jane, and slammed the door. The low rumbling continued at intervals for the next half-hour, sometimes in treble and sometimes in bass; but soon after, the difference in the nature of the sounds convinced the girl that heavy slumber had once more returned to the eyelids of the weary Felixes, who were now in dreamland, joyfully amusing themselves with a duett of delight, as they saw the figure of Jane balanced upon the pitchfork of an individual who shall be nameless.

In the mean time she had stepped into the hall upstairs, and opened the door leading into the garret, to reassure herself that Katie had not been awakened by the tumult.

"I was sure she couldn't hear through all them doors," she whispered, "but I didn't think it was goin' to make quite so much noise. She's all right, though; dear little beauty! And so are you, Mr. and Mrs. Bluebeard; especially the missus," chuckling to herself, and looking toward the door leading from the kitchen into their room. Then she continued at her work as we have seen her, disturbed by no pangs of conscience, singing to herself in a low voice, looking out of the window, and feeling very happy because of the sunshine.

The bright beams lit up the dreary attic where the child lay asleep. They crept toward her as though they would fain protect her from the darkness evermore. The hours passed by, and still she wakened not.

See, she smiles in her slumber. She is dreaming still. The child spirit has come again, and said to her, "I cannot take you with me yet, to live, but I will in good time. Come, and I will go with you, and then I must return beyond the skies, for 'tis very beautiful where I dwell. And you shall dwell there, too; but not yet."

And so they passed together through green fields and along the side of a murmuring stream, where very beautiful flowers grew, and all the air was filled with fragrance. And the child said, "Let us stay here."

And the spirit answered, "Some time; but not now."

And again they passed on till they came to a dreary moor, and the clouds were very dark above them, and the blackness of night settled over them, and the thunders shook the earth, and the lightnings showed only a bleak and barren plain, with grim mountains towering up beyond. And the child trembled, and said, "Must I pass over this plain?" And the spirit answered, in a voice which was very sweet and tender,—

"Yes, but do not fear; though you cannot see me, I will be with you all the way."

So she led her along till they came to a great city. And she said, "I will show you my home, where I lived when I was here."

They walked on through wide streets with stately mansions on either side.

"You must have had a very beautiful home," said the child.

"Yes," answered the spirit; "it was beautiful. There are very few homes in this street so beautiful as mine."

At last they came to what seemed to be a very narrow lane, with towering houses; and some seemed almost ready to fall upon them as they passed. There were rough faces in the streets, and the people appeared to be very poor.

"When will we come to your beautiful home?" asked the child, as she clung more closely to her guide.

"We are almost there now," answered the other.

Then they turned into a still narrower alley, and began climbing up a flight of old creaking stairs. On their way up, there met them a boy, with a bright, happy face, and carrying in his hand a pail.

"This is my brother," said the spirit; "and he is happier than almost anybody who lives in any one of those mansions. He does not know that I am near him, but see: I will make him happy, and he shall not know what it is that brings so sudden gladness into his heart." Then the child saw the spirit press her lips against his cheek, and he smiled, not knowing her, or seeing her, and passed on.

They entered a little room, which was on almost the top floor. A woman sat sewing for her daily bread. An open Bible lay before her, and often she paused to wipe away the tears that dimmed her eyes. Then she would read aloud a promise from the book, and smile, and look up, and sometimes clasp her hands, as though in momentary prayer. One promise written there she seemed to repeat a great many times:

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

And the spirit said,—

"This was my home. See, I will make my mother happy too." Then she put her white arms about the woman's neck, and stroked her hair, and wiped away her tears, and laid her soft cheek close to hers, and whispered in a low, silvery tone, such as that in which angels speak,—

"Listen to the words of the Master: Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life:

"Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

And the careworn look on the woman's face faded away, and she too smiled; and she knew not that the spirit of the little child, whose voice she had never thought to hear again in this world, was so near her; only she felt very happy, and could not tell why.

"And do you angel spirits come back to earth to help us in our trouble?" asked the child.

"Oh, yes," said the other. "Heaven is very near. Heaven is everywhere, where there is no sin; heaven is all about us here."

Then she laid her fingers on the child's eyes, and behold, as they looked through the window, the narrow

alley and the dreary street seemed full of pure and holy forms, each bearing some message of peace.

"And who are these?" asked the child.

And the voice answered, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

"But you said your home was very beautiful?"

"And so it was," replied the spirit again; "for we each loved the other very dearly, and tried to be patient, and deny ourselves, that the others might be happier because we lived. There is no other beautiful home but such an one, my child."

And as she spoke, the door opened and the boy entered.

"Here's the water, mother," he said, as he laid down the pail; "can I help you any more?" And the mother answered,—

"No, child; go and play now." So he kissed her and went out. Then the dingy room and the narrow alley faded away, and the spirit led her to a humble cottage which she recognized as her old home.

"Good-by," said the spirit; "I must leave you now."

"Good-by," answered the child.

So she seemed to be in the little sitting-room as of old, seated on Mike's lap, with her head on his shoulder, and the dog looking up into their faces. And she heard him read, as she had so many times, the very verses which the careworn woman had read in the dreary chamber; and she heard him tell her again, as he had so often before, just what the spirit told her: that only good people were happy, and that any home would be

beautiful where love was. And she said, as she nestled more closely into his bosom,—

"I thought I never should see you any more. I have been oh! so unhappy. There were bad people where I was." And he answered,—

"It was only a dream, darlin'. You are here with papa, and he will never let any bad people have you." Then he covered her face with kisses, and pressed her in his great strong arms. She was so happy to think it was all a dream, and said, as she placed her baby hand in his,—

"We will be always together; won't we, papa?"

"Yes, little one," he answered; and he kissed her once more. But the lips which touched her cheek seemed not like those of his great bearded face; they were soft as a woman's. Then his form grew very indistinct. She was no longer in his arms, or even in the cosey room. Still the pressure of the lips lingered on her cheek; and as her eyes partly opened, a tender voice said,—

"Come, darlin': we must hurry now, for it is very late. Don't be afraid. It's only Jane."

## CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH MRS. FELIX IS CONSIDERABLY "SHOOK UP" WITH AN EARTHQUAKE.

As Jane was helping Katie to dress, the shrill voice of her mistress was heard from below calling her name. The child still lingered in a mist of dreamland, scarcely knowing that she was yet awake, except by that heavy undefined sinking at the heart which the morning had brought to many a tired soul before her, and will bring again to many another after her, gave a sudden start, and then throwing her arms about the girl's neck, began to cry.

"Don't cry, baby dear," said the other. "Tisn't anythin' but the cacklin' o' the old hen. I've fixed her though, for one while. She won't come totin' up here to put you to bed again very quick.—Yes'm, I'm comin', just as fast as ever I can," as the sounds grew more tumultuous below. "Let her cackle; I don't care. Now, darlin', put your arm into the sleeve.—Yes'm, right away." Then, in an undertone, "Holler if you want to. Hope you'll get enough of it by'n by; you may make your throat as sore as your old shin for all I care."

"Jane, you come down here right away, an' don't let me call you again," shrieked the voice from below.

"Wait a moment, Katie, I'll be right back," said the girl, running to the head of the stairs and leaning over.

"I'll come the very moment I can, Mrs. Felix," she

cried, "but the roof's leaked awful durin' the night, an' if I don't mop it up right away it'll be runnin' clean through the floors an' down stairs, an' all over everything. It's awful!"

"Oh, mercy me!" exclaimed the woman. "Mop it up this minute, an' don't you dare to come down-stairs till it's all dry. Joshua! Joshua!" she shouted. "Where is that man Joshua?"

"You needn't be callin' for Joshua," muttered Jane, as she returned to Katie. "I see him a goin' down the street for a Sunday bender fifteen minutes ago."

"But where is the water?" asked Katie, looking around.

"Oh, that's all in my eye; there ain't no water; but I knowed the old man was away, an' the old 'oman won't trouble us for a bit, I reckon. She was callin' for the arnike when I come up. I fixed her; an' I'll fix her again if she lamms you any more."

"But wasn't that a wrong story?" asked the child.

"Oh, yes, darlin'; it was a wrong story," answered Jane, after a moment of thoughtfulness, making big eyes and wagging her head in what she intended to be a very solemn manner. "Don't you never tell a fib like that; never, never, n-e-v-e-r! But then, Jane, she ain't nobody nohow, you know. Jane's got to lie sometimes to get even with the old 'oman. If I didn't lie a little, you know, instead o' dressin' you here, I'd have to be down there rubbin' her old shin. But don't you never lie. Katie, promise Jane you'll never lie."

"No," answered the child, "my papa told me it was wicked to tell lies; and he said that nobody could go to heaven who did that. Aren't you going to heaven, Jane?"

"Well, I dunno," replied the other, with an undefined consciousness that in some way her logic had failed of its design. "Yes, I hope so, some day; when I get through with the old 'oman. Come, now, you're all dressed. Put your arms around Jane's neck; that's right. Now she'll carry you down-stairs. If Mrs. Felix says anything to you about the water, don't you tell a lie. Tell her you don't know."

Very tenderly she bore her to the hall below. Then placing her down, she whispered,—

"Now you stand here till she calls, an' then you just sing out, 'Yes, I'm comin'; I'm half-way down now.' I'll be listenin', an' I'll call away her attention somehow. She shan't lamm you again if I can help it."

With a fluttering heart Katie stood listening. Soon the voice called.

"Yes'm," she answered. "I'm coming; I'm almost down now."

"Mrs. Felix! Mrs. Felix!" shouted Jane. "Oh, where's that arnike? Oh, how I've burned my finger against the stove! Oh, la! Oh, la!"

Amid the confusion which ensued Katie descended unobserved, and went into the kitchen, where the table was spread for her breakfast.

"Well, you've got the arnike at last," said the woman. "Surprisin' how quick you can find it when you want to use it on yourself. Here I been a callin' for it all the mornin', an' my leg a achin' like it was all barked to pieces. You're done with it now; give it to me, an' I'll go in an' rub myself. Hurry up with them dishes an' go off to Sunday-school, an' take that young thing with you."

Mrs. Felix was very scrupulous regarding the observance of the Sabbath. Her mother had been a devout Methodist; a truly good woman. The daughter had carried the habits of childhood into mature years, and every Sabbath found her, with her household, in the congregation, listening to the discourse, and giving it all away. As the clergyman's sermon was the only thing she ever did give away (being usually absorbed in her devotions when the collection-box came round), she felt called upon to distribute it in very large chunks to all her neighbors and friends. Jane especially was "fed with the Word" for the whole week, whenever occasion presented itself.

"It'll be a good while afore she can go to meetin' to find any new names to sling at me," the girl chuckled to herself; remembering the frequency with which she had been likened to Jezebel and the scarlet woman.

"What's the matter, Katie? you don't eat nothin'," exclaimed she, as she noticed that the child left the dainty piece of meat which she had slyly saved for her untouched. "Ha'n't you got no appetite this mornin'?"

"I don't want anything to eat," replied the child, her eyes filling with tears. "I want to see my papa again. I dreamed that I was with him last night; and he said he never would let her get me any more. Then I woke up and found he wasn't here at all, and it was all a dream. He never left me alone so long before. Will he come for me to-day, Jane?"

"I don't know, my darlin'. He'll come by'n by, perhaps, if you're a good girl an' eat up your breakfast." And she continued sweeping up the crumbs, muttering to herself about people "as would leave their own flesh

an' blood lyin' loose around the country like a bundle in the express office, to be left till called for."

"Jane!" shouted the high treble of Mrs. Felix from the next room, "don't you know it's most time for Sunday-school? Here you are dilly-dallying around on the Lord's holy day, an' this the very Sunday when Mr. Cole's goin' to talk about the poor heathen!"

"The poor heathen be blowed!" muttered Jane in an undertone, as she hung up her broom and retired upstairs with Katie, to get ready for their departure.

The crisp winter's morning put her in a better humor; and even Katie forgot in a measure her sorrows as they walked gayly along toward the church.

"If this wasn't the heathen Sunday we'd hookie it," she said; "but I'm afraid the old 'oman 'll catch me, by askin' me how many was converted since the last report. I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's stay till I get the figures, an' then you be took sick, an' we'll have to be excused. Oh, no, that won't do either. That would be tellin' a lie; an' don't you never tell any lies, you know. It's wicked; it's awful wicked. Besides that, she might find it out an' wax you. I'll be took sick. She can't wax me even if she does find it out; she can only blow, an' she'll do that anyhow, so we might as well give her some'n to blow for."

So at the proper time Jane was seized with a violent pain in her stomach, which, as she described it to the teacher, made her feel "kind o' criss-cross all-overish, so she couldn't stand it no longer." It was astonishing how speedily she revived when she had once regained the stimulating atmosphere of the street and her back was turned on the Sunday-school. It was the first "outing"

she had had that week, and she actually skipped with delight at her sense of freedom, as she walked through the village in an opposite direction from her home. When they were almost out of sight and hearing of the church, there fell upon their ears the indistinct sound of the scholars' voices singing,—

"Oh, how I love the Sunday-school!
The Sunday-school, the Sunday-school!
Oh, how I love the Sunday-school
Upon the Sabbath-day!"

"All right," she muttered. "Love it if you want to. Break your heart over it if you want to. You can have it all; I don't want any of it."

As they walked on, the whole influence of nature was exhilarating. They wandered up through the back streets of the village, as far as the snow-plough had cleared away the track. They looked longingly toward the country roads, but the drifts were too high. It seemed almost to them like a new world to get out from the little hotel, the pent-up scene of wrangling and discontent, into the pure crisp morning, with the earth and the sky all telling of gladness.

"What will I say if Mrs. Felix asks us where we've been?" inquired Katie, feeling the nippings of conscience.

"Say we've been to school," replied Jane.

"But suppose she asks me if we came right home?" persisted the child.

"Tell her yes. So we are; we're goin' right through this street, an' then right through another street, an' then right through another street, an' so right home. That ain't no fib. 'Taint no business o' hern, nohow."

Katie said no more, but felt that in some manner there was a strange discrepancy between the teaching of her new preceptor and her old one,—though wherein the difference lay she could not have told. Like the great mass of untrained people in the world, she felt the truth rather than perceived it. It was with considerable trepidation that she returned to the presence of Mrs. Felix. She drew close to Jane as they entered the gate, and passed up the walk toward the house. The keen, suspicious eyes of the woman saw them as they came in, and immediately she thought she recognized on the face of the child a sense of guilt. Doubtless she did. How many a man looks back with quiet amusement, not unmixed with pain, to the day when he smoked his first cigar, and then, with a troubled conscience and by no means pacific stomach, climbed into his mother's lap, as she sat in the old rocking-chair, and, laying his head against her shoulder, felt the awful burden for the first time of cherishing a guilty secret which he could not share with her. He remembers his surprise at her powers of divination when she kissed him, and then asked if he had been smoking; how wonderful he thought it was that she should know or even suspect.

And to-day, as he sits with his feet upon the fender, idly watching the rings of smoke as they float away, dreaming of the long ago, and in the hazy cloud seeing faces which have long since changed this present mystery for that which lies beyond, he feels that the most priceless possession he has ever had and lost was that unsullied purity of childhood, which could not dissimulate even when it tried.

Since those days he has filled his lap perhaps with

she found that she was really suspected, her courage forsook her utterly, and she sobbed forth,—

"I didn't mean to, marm; I didn't mean to tell a lie. Don't let the black man have me this time. I will be good."

"Then you knew, did you, that you were telling a falsehood?"

"Yes'm, but I never will again. I never will again. Please don't whip me."

In her terror she fell on her face and actually grovelled at the woman's feet. Mrs. Felix stood glowering above her, with her teeth tightly shut, her hands clasped, and the deep lines showing themselves in her vixenish face.

"Get up!" she cried, as she struck her with her foot.

The child shrank from her in fright.

"You'll lie to me, will you! We'll see about that. Jane, you go into the next room."

The girl did not move.

"Go into the next room; do you hear?"

She sauntered slowly toward the door, as though hesitating what to do.

"Hurry up about it," exclaimed the mistress. "Don't be all day. You've got enough to do to go about your work. I can attend to her."

"Oh, don't whip me! don't whip me!" cried the terrified child again. "I will never do it again. Don't whip me!"

Mrs. Felix said nothing, but stood scowling at Jane until she had withdrawn. Then she walked deliberately over with those wafer lips pressed together, and shut and locked the door.

"I'll teach you to lie to me," she said, slowly shaking her head and glaring again at her victim.

The child, now almost wild with terror at the uncertain fate which awaited her, shrunk into a corner, turning away her face as she felt the gaze of her tormentor fixed upon her, and exclaimed again,—

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! I didn't mean to! I didn't mean to! If you'll only forgive me this time I will be very good. I will never be so wicked again."

The woman made no reply, but with the deliberation of Sanson at the guillotine, walked, or rather limped on her lame foot, toward the bureau. Opening it, she brought out a wide thick strap, a part of an old harness. Katie uttered a fresh cry when she saw it, and buried her face in her hands.

Coldly and leisurely, as though gloating in the anguish of the child, she drew it several times through her hand, keeping her eye fixed remorselessly on her victim.

"You lied to me. I'll give you a lesson that you'll remember just as long as you live. You're a young'n, but you might as well learn it now as at any other time."

Saying this, with the same grim determination she grasped the strap more firmly, and hobbling across the room, lifted her hand above her shoulder. The child crouched in the corner and threw her little arms above her, as though to avert the blow.

"Don't whip me," she cried again. "I will be good."

"You little liar! I'll whip you within an inch of your life."

The hand descended with what was meant to be a terrific blow, but when it came down it was empty.

"No, you won't whip her within an inch of her life,"

hissed the voice of Jane behind her, as she grasped the strap at the very moment when Mrs. Felix's hand was descending. "We'll see if you will."

The bedroom had two doors: one leading into the hall through which Jane had been dismissed, and which the woman had shut and locked, and another, as we have seen, leading from the kitchen, which had no lock, but only a latch. Here it was that Jane had been standing, muttering to herself and clinching her fists during her mistress's deliberate preparations. She had been in the household now for two years, and had never attempted to rebel against her authority, bearing silently all kinds of abuse except personal violence, which Mrs. Felix never had offered, as she seemed too big and strong. She was one of those persons who appear to have been born to be imposed upon, and take to it naturally, as a dog does to the fleas which bite him. Her deepest nature, however, which perhaps never could have been stirred to make much effort in her own behalf, had been called forth in sympathy for this little waif, so friendless and alone. Her habit of surly compliance had kept her outside the door until the last moment of peril to her adopted charge. Then, forgetting all else, she rushed in, with only the single thought of saving her.

As she wrenched the strap the great buckle at the end tore its way through Mrs. Felix's hand, leaving an ugly gash across the palm and several fingers. Never was mortal more surprised. Shrieking with pain and anger, she turned toward Jane, and shouted,—

"Oh, you vixen! Give me that strap this minute, and get out of this room!"

"I won't! Not without that child."

It was the first time she had ever answered her thus. She stood there, with her usually dull eye now inflamed with defiant fury; her arms, grasping the strap, thrown back over her shoulder in an attitude of defence; her hot pulses beating violently and sending the blood into her face. In that moment she would have faced an army of ten thousand men,—yes, if it meant certain death.

"Give it to me, I say, this minute!" cried Mrs. Felix again.

"I won't!" responded the girl once more, standing motionless and firm, as conscious and conscientious strength alone knows how to stand. They were both of them angry; but with one it was the anger of vengeance, which is the anger of devils. With the other it was the anger of indignation, which is the anger of God. And God won. Hell, as in olden time,—yes, as in every time,—trembled in the presence of divinity. We have seen that Mrs. Felix was a bully; we do not need to say, therefore, that she was a coward. A bully is simply a coward in masquerade.

"What do you mean in comin' into my room an' interferin' in my bringin' up this gell in the way she should go? Don't you know I'm only tryin' to do it for her own good?" she asked, in a more subdued tone.

"Well, you ain't goin' to wax her when I'm around," said the girl, fiercely. "I'd be ashamed! Lickin' a little innocent child, not six years old, as though she was a hoss. Lickin' her for lyin', an' then lyin' to her in the same breath! Tellin' her about a black man an' a bear! Look under that bed, Katie; don't you see she's

been lyin' to you? There ain't no bear there, an' there never was," she continued, her indignation growing in vehemence with its expression in speech.

"Do you want to spoil the child?" said the other, her fury once more returning. "You houseless beggars! I'll put you both out into the street."

"Pay me my wages, then, that you been owin' me for the last eleven months, an' we'll go into the street," replied Jane. "Spoil the child?" And then, made more reckless by the expectation of her dismissal, with the mutterings of two years finding their escape at last, she continued: "I'm spoilin' to spoil you, so I am; an' I'll do it, too, if you lay a little finger of your skinny old hand on her again. Gi' me my wages an' we'll go, I tell you."

Mrs. Felix became calmer immediately. She saw that Jane was in earnest, and could not be brow-beaten into acquiescence. She was actually afraid of a thrashing from the enraged girl, who, though but seventeen years of age, was strong beyond her years. She knew, moreover, that she did not have the money to pay the wages which she demanded, and consequently could not discharge her even if she would. It was a dilemma from which there was no escape, so in a very subdued tone, which was meant to be conciliatory, she said,—

"Jane, you forget that I am your mistress. You know I only intended to do the best I could to bring up this gell right. If you think you can do any better, try it an' see. I haven't the heart to turn you an' her out on this cold winter's day. I wouldn't think of such a thing, anyhow, after you have been in my house for two years. In many respects you've been a very faithful

gell; an' if you want to have charge of her, why, you see what you can do with her, that's all. It's a sin for us to stand here quarrellin' like this on the Lord's holy day. I'm all tired to death with it an' have got to lie down. You take her an' go into the kitchen."

Jane, scarcely understanding the new turn that affairs had taken, was very willing to depart with Katie in her arms. The child understood it still less, and with her hands tightly clasped about her protector's neck, did not even breathe as she was being borne out of the room, lest she should be summoned back again by the shrill command of the woman whose very presence filled her with terror.

The girl sat down with her in the rocking-chair by the kitchen fire, and with tear-stained face close up against Katie's hot cheek, her arms wound firmly about her, she called her her "little angel, and told her many times that she would take care of her; that she should grow up to be her little girl and never have to do any work, but only play just as she chose through all the hours of the day. She told her how she would work so hard that she might buy her nice clothes again, and how, when they grew old, they would go and live in some little house all by themselves, and have many other little girls about them, whom they could make happy. And when the child grew tired of her stories, then she sung to her in a low, crooning tone a lullaby. There was not much melody there; you or I might have found much to criticise; but I think it fell like sweetest music on the ears of God's angels. For as they looked in and beheld that scene, they saw a poor outcast girl, who had received her education chiefly from the streets during her neglected

childhood; who had never known much else but blows and threatenings, but who now, for the first time in her lonely life, had learned to love.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### NATURE DEMANDS HER PAY.

WHEN Mike, half crazed with the tidings of the burning ship, and of the subsequent landing and escape of Signor Porta, rushed forth from the office of the Neptune steamship line, it was with a spirit of utter despair. He was not the kind easily to rebuild a future from a broken past; it seemed as though the ruins lay heavily upon him, crushing him, and he with no possible escape. All he could do was to cry out within himself, over and over again,—

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Dead! Dead! Maggie dead! And Katie lost! Oh, my God! Oh, my God!"

He did not see the people as they looked at this strangely-acting man, moaning to himself as he hurried on. There were but two facts in the universe to him in that hour; he knew that the only woman he had ever loved, and whom, notwithstanding her sin, he loved still, was nevermore to be seen by him in this world. She was gone,—gone! How the word sounded as he repeated it to himself! If he could only have seen her once more! Could only have felt the pressure of her hand as she was dying, and heard some last word of penitence! If he could only have knelt beside her in

that last dread hour and prayed God to wipe away this black guilt from her soul! But she was gone,—gone,—gone!

It all came back to him,—the past. He remembered how she looked on that morning when he first saw her long ago, standing at the gate of her uncle's home; the gay, thoughtless merriment of girlhood sparkling in her laughing eyes, the long dark hair falling down against the light summer dress which she wore; the red roses on the garden wall looking in envy at the blush on her round cheeks. He saw it all: the sunlit morning, the long garden-walk stretching behind her, fringed with hawthorn-bushes, each clad in its pink or white robe of summer blossoms; the comfortable old house, where she had lived since the day when her uncle had taken her, as an orphaned babe, to be henceforth his own; a house all overgrown with ivy and climbing roses, so that the windows themselves looked only like strangely-shapen openings in a wall of green. How little they had thought on that morning what the end should be! Who could have guessed that the companion picture to that scene would be a burning ship at night, with helpless hands stretched out, and frenzied eyes peering forth from a soul more tempest-tossed than the moaning, mournful sea? Then final silence, blackness, wreck!

One other fact he knew: that somewhere in this great pitiless world was their child. Somewhere! But which the path he should take to find her? Who could tell him the way? The man who had ruined the nest, what might he not do with the bird! It was an hour of blank, blind despair, and he hurried on, not because he knew either what he did or whither he went, but because

his awful sense of helplessness was making him mad, and he felt he must do something; he must go somewhere; he must move on, move on, and keep hurrying forward till he found his child.

How many hours he walked the streets he did not know. At last he found himself in his room, worn out with grief; whether he had been there many hours or few he could never tell. That horrible day was like some fearful nightmare, in which we take no note of time. He was trying to collect his thoughts, that he might determine on some immediate action. He was as one standing in some great open trackless prairie, with no stream or trail to guide him. Yes, there was a trail! very faint at first; but as he followed it, it grew clearer. Hans had spoken of the detectives on that first morning after the elopement. So long as there was any hope of saving Maggie he had refused to have her shame made public. Now that hope was gone it was the thing to do. He wondered that he had not thought of it before. Worn, hungry, faint though he was, he roused himself to hurry away to seek them. A minute, a moment lost, might prove too late. Nature bade him stop for food, but nature herself must now submit to that one overmastering passion of his soul, to find his child. With haggard eye and hair dishevelled, he staggered forth into the streets again. It was not yet very dark, but the night was just beginning to settle down over the city. The lamp-lighter going his rounds met him as he came down the steps; and afterward he spoke of the strange, wild, restless look in his eye as Mike peered into his face and then hurried on. He turned, as he supposed, toward the city hall; he did not know

that it would be open at this late hour, but he might at least inquire there, and find where to apply for the detectives whom he sought.

Perhaps his child might be in the streets! These streets! Perhaps hungry and nowhere to go; forsaken by the scoundrel who had ruined her mother. *Possibly Porta might be there!* He ground his teeth at the thought of meeting him. He would look. He would scan every face of child or man whom he met; he would find her!—Yes, if he wandered about all the night long. By this time he had forgotten all about the detectives. She must be in those streets somewhere. The idea seized him and possessed him. He could think of nothing else. Yes, something else; *he must be there, somewhere, too.*

The eye which stared into the passing faces was wilder now than before. There was a strange light in it, and an apparent exultation, as of a soldier in the moment of victory. He shunned the illuminated avenues and wide streets, with their crowds and music and laughter, and went prowling his way through the deserted thoroughfares, with long stretches of vacant lots and board fences on either side. Once he stopped and laughed aloud, and then seeing a figure in the distance he became quiet in a moment, placing his hand over his mouth, bending his head forward, crouching low, and stealing on.

Some time during the night two men were heard in a narrow street crying for help, and when the solitary watchman hurried to meet them he found them running for fear; and they declared that a great giant had met them in the darkness, and springing upon one of them, had demanded that he should give him his child, declaring that if he did not he would kill him. They said

he grasped him at the throat and would not let him go, until both had succeeded in overpowering him and leaving him senseless on the sidewalk. He could not have wanted to rob, they said, for when a watch and purse fell from the pocket of one in the struggle, he did not even notice it, but continued demanding his child. One of them showed the marks on his throat where this giant had tried to choke him; but when they returned with the watchman, he was gone.

About four o'clock in the morning an officer arrived at one of the precinct stations bringing with him a man whom, he said, he had found wandering the streets and crying. He was all covered with blood and talking about his child, and the officer suggested there might have been foul play.

He seemed very docile when he led him in; and when they questioned him, he spoke piteously of a wife and child who that night had been stolen from him; he could say no more than this, for every question which they asked he failed to notice, except those which led him toward the single thought which filled his mind.

Suddenly, as he stood there, he peered into the face of his interrogator, and springing forward, would have clutched him had not others fallen on him and restrained him. Soon he became quiet again, and moaned, and asked for his "little Katie." He said he "would be very kind to her if they would only let him have her once more."

Grief, hunger, suspense, cannot be borne forever. Nature at last was collecting her debt. The man whom he had attacked was right when he exclaimed,—

"Good G—d! He's mad!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### STRIKING THE TRAIL.

THE following evening, as Hans, having finished his supper, sat by the fireside in his home, his feet comfortably up on the fender of the grate, his pipe in his mouth, and the ever-present mug of beer by his side, he suddenly brought the two front legs of the chair in which he sat, and which had been slightly tipped back, down on the floor again, and exclaimed,—

"Vy, Katrine, vat you tinks? Michael is gone mit der crazy. Hear you dis, Katrine."

He then read the account of his insanity and strange pleadings which had been sent that day from New York to the *Jenkinstown Gazette.* A letter had been found in his pocket, by which they had learned the place of his temporary residence in the metropolis; and by examining what few papers he had there, they had discovered the name of the town in which he lived.

"Oh, my graciousness!" he said, when he had finished, as the hand which held the paper fell by his side, and he settled back into his chair, with his head fallen, "I could cry like dot mine heart vas broke. Poor Michael! goin' mit der crazy all alone dere in dot big city, und nobody mit him, und he cryin' about dem streets, all alone in der darkness. Vy, he vas so jolly all der times vonce, dot I jumps mit joyness ven I see him. Mine poor, poor friend! Vat can I do for you now?"

There were various comments among his customers when the news had been read and was being discussed; for the reader is aware that thus far no one knew of the elopement in Jenkinstown except Hans and Mr. Boston, who had written the despatch to Maggie's uncle.

"Poor fellow!" said that gentleman to his wife, as they were sitting together in the drawing-room, when he had read the paragraph, "I hoped he would not take it so hard. He was a good, honest man, and I tried to get him to look at it in a reasonable light."

"Well, everybody has to have just so much sorrow," answered the other; "and if it doesn't come in one form, it will in another."

"Yes, but people are differently constituted to bear sorrow. He wasn't one of the kind that can easily forget. He wasn't like old Deacon Peachum, who bellowed like a young heifer when his first wife died, so that we all thought he surely could not live; but whom we so soon after saw with his benign face set toward the Widow Hamilton's, peacefully ambling over the green at the sight of fresh pastures. Hans Volgate tells me that he just doted on that frivolous wife of his, and his little girl."

"Well, I think people have got just so much capacity for suffering stowed away inside of them; and when any trouble comes, the bigger the torrent, the sooner it's ended. At least, that's been the result of my observation."

"I don't know but that's true, but I'd rather have it go off like a cannon, and the smoke clear away, than have the steady hourly burning of the slow fuse. I pity people like Mike Barney, for their grief seems so hopeless.

When he came here for me to write that despatch, his grim, silent despair made me shudder. And yet I admired him, just as much as I despised old bald-headed Peachum. I think we can set it down as a rule, the bigger the soul, the less the howl."

Hans regarded Mike's trouble as the signal for him to leave nothing undone which in any way could minister to his aid. By indefatigable effort he succeeded in converting the little property of his friend into cash, he himself taking charge of the grocery-store until it could be sold. Every detail was attended to with the advice of Mr. Boston, and therefore according to law, that by no possible slip should Mike be defrauded of anything which he ought to have kept for him by the trustees appointed by the court, of which Hans was one. Finally the store itself was sold, and every dollar placed in the bank, that from the deposit the unfortunate owner might be comfortably maintained in a private asylum until he could assume the direction of his own affairs.

For a time, moreover, the good German sought in every way to discover a clue to Katie; but as the months wore on and every attempt proved abortive, hope gradually faded, until, with the exception of an occasional inquiry sent in the form of a letter, or a still more occasional journey, always resulting in the same disappointment, the events of his life resumed their ordinary tenor of quiet routine.

Thus two years passed away. Hans often visited his friend at the asylum. Others did at first; but there are few things which grow cold sooner than the average quality of active sympathy. We are selfish even in the bestowal of our tears; we seek some fresh excitement

even in our weeping, and the helpless woman whose doors the neighbors thronged when, last year, they bore her husband's form out of her sight, for whom, it seemed, they none of them could do enough then, to-day sits in her lonely home, listening almost in vain for the sound of a footstep. But how can she expect them? They are all so busy crowding in at some other door-way, which next year will be left as desolate as hers is now. People like to be made to cry as well as to laugh; and often they like to cry the best. I wonder, if we could reach the last analysis of our motives, if we should not find selfishness at the bottom of much of our well-meant sympathy, and whether this might not explain the brevity of its continuance after the tingling novelty is gone. Thus the home of the mourner is always crowded,—for a day. It is possible to look even on the tragedy at a funeral with that half-dreamy melancholy with which we gaze upon a play, but which, after all, is productive of so little betterment of the man. The emotions excited at the bier are very often the same kind of a luxury, and they are not half so expensive.

But when these tearful pleasure-seekers have gone their way, searching for new scenes over which to weep, there is usually found some true and patient soul who lingers, like the organist in the dim old cathedral, when the tramp of many triflers' feet has died away, and alone, mingles with the falling shadows of the night creeping through those great solemn aisles the soft melting harmonies which cause heaven to merge with earth. And when we meet with such an one, we recognize the crest of the true nobility. It is the difference between the mock hero and the real, the manikin and the man. One

of the best tests of a deep nature is the staying quality of its sympathies.

Such an one was Hans. And when, one after another, the rest of those who had at first seemed to be deeply moved by the sufferings of Mike ceased to call on him as regularly as they had, and finally dropped out altogether, this faithful fellow never permitted a week to pass without at least bringing with him a bouquet, or some other little reminder that out in the great world there was a heart somewhere throbbing for the stricken one within those walls.

It was not always permitted that they should meet; for Mike, while generally very docile and obedient, was sometimes violent. He could tell, after a while, when these frenzies were about to seize him; for, some hours before, there would be a ringing in his head and convulsive twitchings of the muscles of his body. Then he would say to his attendants,—

"If Hans comes to-day, tell him I ain't as well as usual, an' the doctor won't let me see any one." After this he would go into the cell, which at such times he occupied, and permit himself to be bound, that he might do himself and others no injury, and await the coming delirium. Once the doctor said to him,—

"Perhaps it might have a soothing effect for your friend to be present with you when this comes upon you." But he trembled, and answered,—

"No! I once broke the bindin's, you remember, doctor. Nobody knows what evil I moight do thin. He mustn't be let to get in thin, doctor."

Hans soon came to know the meaning of the message, and when the attendant had delivered it, and received

the little token of remembrance to present to Mike, he would ask no questions, but only shake his head, and turn sadly away, to repeat his visit sooner again than was his wont.

As the months passed, these periods of frenzy became less and less frequent, till at last the physician said to him one morning,—

"I think you are almost ready to be discharged now, Mike."

"Thank the Lord for that, sir," he answered.

"By the first of next month I think you can be permitted to go, provided you will make me a promise."

"Anything that's roight, sir," he replied.

"You will have occasionally these old fits of frenzy coming on. You have now learned to recognize their approach very readily. Jenkinstown, where I presume you will stop, is not far from here, and I think it will be safe for you to go, if you can live in the same house with Hans Volgate, and submit to his surveillance; and furthermore, if, the moment you shall feel these symptoms returning, you will come straight here. It may not be necessary for you to remain for any length of time, but you must be here under proper treatment during their continuance."

Mike very readily promised all that was required, and Hans was overjoyed when the news was conveyed to him.

"Oh, my graciousness!" he cried, clapping his hands, "I could laugh me vild mit joyness." Then with his little fat legs wabbling up to Mike, he threw his stumpy arms as far about him as they would reach, and continued: "I vas so happy as never vas before. Oh, I got to blow

my noses right avay quick, by chiminey!" Reaching for his pocket-handkerchief, wiping away the tears of gladness from his eyes, he sounded a long, loud note of thankfulness, which would certainly have been heard in the great congregation if the great congregation had been there to hear.

Of course Mike had by no means forgotten, during these years, the great burden of his sorrow. That is a merciful provision of our Creator, however, which leads us in time to become accustomed to the inevitable. He had become convinced that he could do nothing, at least until he was recovered; and he had Hans' assurance that he was following every clue, with occasional reports from him in reference to the progress of his search. He was nevertheless determined that, as soon as health should return, the one aim of his life should be to find his child. So, after his release, he would sit every morning in Hans' little back family room, reading the papers in search of clues and studying the reports of abductions and of lost children, which, by special arrangement, were furnished by the detectives' bureau in New York.

"If I'd only read the papers in toime I moight ha' had her wid me now," he would say, shaking his head.

It was a sad sight to see him there. The form, recently so erect, had become slightly bent, as of one bowed beneath a burden. The locks were gray which hung down on his shoulders, and none would have thought him less than fifty years of age. His whiskers had become pure white in those two years, and few could have readily recognized in the bent old man, sitting so quietly before the fireplace, with the paper in his hands, the gay, jovial Mike whom we first saw on that winter's

night. Bob knew him, however; for Hans had long since adopted him into his own household. The lonely man felt a peculiar tenderness toward his dog; he seemed like the hyphen connecting him with the past. And he even fancied that the brute reciprocated more than anybody knew this feeling of tenderness and sympathy, as he placed his chin across his master's knee, wagging his tail and wrinkling his forehead while he looked up into his face. And so Mike came to treat him almost as a human being; talking to him, and stroking his head fondly, as though he were a child. Sometimes, as they sat alone through the long hours, when both Hans and Katrine were away, Mike would tell him all about those days when he and Katie were accustomed to meet him at the door in the old home. Then if he chanced to find any item which seemed to cast a ray of hope across his path, he would start in his chair and say,—

"Listen to this, Bob!" And he would read it to his dog, who would lift his head and prick up his ears, as though he comprehended it all, and would even, at times, rise and leap toward the door, and bark, as though he felt as impatient as his master at the long delay. Thus they made many a journey into the surrounding country together, and always with the same object in view. They were never separated; and many an one whom they met would bow respectfully to the old man, and then turn to watch him after he had passed, trudging slowly onward with his cane, and Bob running before him, and then bounding back to him again. They knew his errand, for his sad story had become part of the history of the little town; and when he passed they would say to their friends,—

"There he is! That's the one I told you of last night down at the club. Poor fellow! He isn't exactly right up here, you know," tapping the forehead suggestively. "Probably never get over it, you know. Thinks every day he'll find his child. Been in the asylum once. They tell me he has to go occasionally even now."

One evening when Mr. Boston had come home, and was sitting with his wife at the table reading his paper, he looked up and said,—

"By the way, I saw Mike to-day. He's greatly altered, and I don't know when my heart has been made to ache more. It's a fearful seed a man sows when he commits a selfish act; and the worst of it is, the harvest has to be reaped by so many who are innocent. If Porta could see poor Mike Barney now, he'd either have to suffer a good deal of remorse or have a terribly hard heart to resist it."

"Yes, if I had to be either one, I'd rather be Mike Barney than Porta," answered Mrs. Boston. "Do you remember what we read from Milton last night?" she continued, picking up a copy of "Comus" which lay on the table.

> "'He that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
> Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
> Himself is his own dungeon.'

I don't believe it makes much real difference in the punishment a man receives whether 'murder will out' or not; it must be bad enough to have it in. The memory of an unrepented crime must be an awful load to carry."

"Yes, in the very nature of things, I don't believe a man, intentionally bad, can be a happy man," replied the other. "I can't conceive of a man's securing any real happiness except through self-conquest; because whatever else he may have, he must carry the consciousness in the midst of it all that he's been whipped in the fight. It is he that overcometh that 'inherits all things,' in this world and in every world; for it is one of the deepest laws of our moral constitution; this old world is changed into the new heavens and the new earth only when we ourselves become new. And I fully agree with you; I would rather ten thousand times be Barney with the memory of having been sinned against, than Porta with the memory of having sinned. That, moreover, is my idea of the difference between heaven and hell; that it consists not so much in where a man is as in what he is. According to Peter, Christ visited the spirits in prison during those three days between his death and resurrection; but there was no hell there for him, because there was no hell in him."

"That's my thought on the matter," she answered. "A man with his face set toward evil need not ask if he is going to hell; he's in hell just so long as hell is in him. That corresponds with Milton again,—

"'Which way I turn is hell; myself am hell.'

But you were going to say something about Mike."

"Yes, I was. I met him to-day,—him and Hans. It is something wonderful, the love which seems to exist between those two. They were sitting under one of the oak-trees just as you come into town; I thought Mike

looked a little strange, and so I stopped and spoke to him. 'It's nothin', Mr. Boston,' he answered; 'it's nothin';' but I noticed his eyes looked wild and his hands twitched as he grasped firmly hold of Hans. I remembered the various rumors I had heard about the necessity of his going out to the asylum occasionally, and as I saw I could do nothing, and my questions appeared to excite him, I drove on. Afterward I met Hans, however, and he told me in his broken English that they were on their way to the institution, and had sat down there to rest a little while. My heart really went out to the poor fellow when I saw him choking back the sobs, especially when he apologized for it, and said it was because he had to hold in so long when he was with Mike, lest it should arouse him; and that he couldn't bear the thought of leaving his friend in that stone cell, bound in a strait-jacket, and he nowhere near to help him. You know we've often laughed at his inability to wrestle with our idioms, but his poor roundabout way of expressing himself really seemed to add to the simple unconscious beauty of the man's soul. To be sure, he stumbled over a verb or two, and went flying headlong after an adjective, only to find himself engulfed in an adverb; his speech was twisted as ever; he wouldn't be Hans Volgate if it wasn't; but I never felt more deeply impressed with the fact that, underneath all different garbs, human nature is the same the world over. And I think, notwithstanding the bad, there is a great deal of good in it."

"Yes, there are a great many heads in the world," she answered; "but there's only one heart. A Dutchman is a Dutchman only in his brain, but not in his being; in

the way he thinks, not in the way he feels. And that is true of all men. I think if we come to analyze the tears of a Hottentot, they're just like ours; made of the same water and salt. If I were a novelist, I think it would be my aim to emphasize this; to enlarge people's sympathies with the social classes to which they do not belong; that they should not judge of them coldly, and therefore falsely, from the outside, but genuinely, from the inside. That the foot should not hate the head, nor the head the foot; but that when the foot was trodden on, the whole body should resent it."

Mr. Boston was proud of his wife, and he had reason to be; for she was a woman of clear ideas. In how far this was due to his appreciative encouragement during their married life it would be perhaps impossible to say. This was true, however, that he did not belong to that company of Bantam men who endeavor to maintain their own importance in the barnyard by making it exceedingly uncomfortable for all the rest of the dwellers therein. He never sought to enlarge himself by belittling his wife. The gentleman did not say, "Pooh, pooh!" with a majestic wave of his hand, as though, while comprehending the whole matter himself, it was beneath his dignity to discuss it with the feminine gender. He waited respectfully till she had finished, and then replied,—

"I liked what our minister said about that the other evening. You were not out, and consequently missed it. He said, 'I do not believe in rich churches; and I do not believe in poor churches. I believe in the Lord's churches, where the rich and the poor meet together, remembering that the Lord is the maker of them all.' I

liked that. If men could only emphasize the things we human beings have in common, instead of dwelling always upon the points in which we differ, all classes could understand one another so much better. The fact is, I think that if we could look into the heart of our worst enemy, we should see so much of pain and sorrow there that we would not only pity him, but love. Hasn't somebody said that 'humanity is like the sea; called by different names according to the shores against which it washes, but the same sea, nevertheless'?"

"Well, somebody ought to have said it, whether he did or not; for certainly there's nothing more thoroughly true."

"And how much more we come to love a man," continued her husband, "when we think of him not as a Dutchman, nor as an Englishman, nor an Irishman, nor an American man; but only as a man. When we look at his soul instead of his soil, his life instead of his label."

When a year had gone by from the time of Mike's release the physician told him that, if he chose, he could without danger enter upon some regular occupation which should not tax in too great a degree his physical or mental faculties. It was glad news to him, for to a healthy man the hardest work in life is to do none. Gentlemen of leisure are generally short-lived. They die of overwork; they kill themselves in killing time.

"It koind o' helps a man whin he can feel that he's o' use somewhere," he would say to Hans. "There's lots got trouble besides me, but that's no reason why we shouldn't be ready to lind a hand in the world's work.

Sure I don't want to be loike one o' thim empty cans that I used to keep in the grocery simply to fill up the windee. If a man fills up the space in this world, he wants to have somethin' inside of him which 'll make the world schwater." Besides that, he felt the need of working, as he said, "For the sake o' layin' by for the choild, ye know."

Every day, at the close of his task, he would return to his chair in Hans' little back room, to look over the papers in a fresh search for any possible clue. There were no more reports from the detectives' bureau now. They had given up the search as hopeless, and Mike had taken their advice not to waste his money in securing information which could be of no possible value to him. He was ever chiding himself that he had not looked into the daily paper on that eventful morning; so that, as we all try to atone for some past duty unperformed by doubling our diligence when it can do no good,—multiplying our kind words over the dead, perhaps, because we know he starved for sympathy while he lived,—so the passion grew with Mike to study, far into the night, the columns of the papers which he received daily from the chief cities of the Union.

One evening, about five years after the return of Porta, Hans came into the room, and found him trembling violently.

"I've got it, Hans! I've got it!" he cried, lifting both hands, in one of which was a copy of a Chicago journal. The dog was already standing with his head erect, pricking up his ears and wagging his tail.

"Listen to this, Hans! Listen to this!" But his arms shook so violently as he spread the paper out be-

fore his eyes that the impatient German entreated him to let him take it and read it for himself.

"Read it aloud, thin," cried Mike, as he surrendered it to his friend, and bent forward eagerly that he might not miss a word. The other turned to the article, and read as follows:

"*The Military Adventures of a Home Guard.—Mike's Muscular Mate.—Some Spicy Scenes.—The Terminating Thump.*

"The *Bugle Call*, a bright little paper which is published in Jenkinstown, Ohio, gives an amusing account of a mystery in the life of one of its deceased citizens which has never been cleared up. A fire occurred last week in the village, and in trying to conquer the flames two men lost their lives. One of these was quite a character in his way, and several interesting reminiscences are referred to in illustration of his fatal genius for blundering. The most striking blunder of all, however, was one for which, so far as known, he was in no way responsible. It seems that at one time several years ago he belonged to the home guards in his adopted village, and the article explains the circumstances of his suddenly resigning his membership in that honorable body, which no inducement could ever persuade him to renew.

"The circumstances were these: one day a despatch arrived at his house, addressed to his name, Michael Barney, and calling upon him to come and take care of his child. It was dated from some village in the direction of Groveland, but precisely where we are not informed. When it arrived, Barney was away from home, and it

fell into the hands of Mrs. Barney. So did Barney when he reached home; he fell into her hands too. From the account given, we judge that her political proclivities were on the side of protection. She believed, in fact, in monopoly; and when she learned of the existence of the other firm she became violently enraged. She did not stop to question the possibility of mistake, but concluded at once that in his connubial relations her husband had become a Free-Trader. We ought to have mentioned, furthermore, that for many years home rule had been one of her hobbies. At this moment Barney returned, dressed in his span new soldier clothes. But by the end of five minutes he had passed through the Crimea, the war of 1776, and the French Revolution. In fact, long before the five minutes were up he felt like a veteran. During that period he had

'Fought and died in freedom's cause'

several times over. Laying aside all figure of speech, which might appear unseemly in reference to so serious an affair, she mopped the floor with him a number of times, after which she played ball with him for a good while; he acting as the ball, and she as the pitcher and short stop. Then she let him 'see London,' by standing him on his head, and closed the performances by wringing the perspiration out of him and hanging him over the clothes-horse to dry.

"The most mysterious part of the whole affair yet remains to be told. When they visited the town from which the despatch had come, they found a child; but the woman who kept the hotel, and whose name was

signed to the message, knew nothing, or said she knew nothing, of its having been sent. A strange man, according to her story, had left the child there, and having telegraphed to Barney, and signed her name, had skipped the ranch for parts unknown. Of course we venture no opinion in reference to the truth of the woman's statement. We are glad, for Mrs. Barney's sake, that she was so easily convinced of the soundness of her husband's views on the tariff question. We are not at all surprised, however, to learn that the amount of guying which the affair caused to fall upon the head of Mr. Barney, when the story of his gallant engagement became known, caused him to retire from the list of village braves. And with all due deference to the memory of the departed, and while sincerely admiring the Christian charity of the *Bugle Call* in drawing the mantle of brotherly kindness over the past history of its deceased subscriber, we must nevertheless send back to them the statement that to us, sitting as we do in the midst of hard-hearted Chicago, there is wafted on the breeze to our olfactories the odor of a colored individual in the wood-pile."

When Hans had finished reading the article, Mike waited eagerly for an expression of his opinion. He could not exactly explain the reason of his assurance that Katie was identical with the child mentioned in the paragraph; but he was just as sure of it as though he could.

"Michael," exclaimed Hans, after a moment spent in going over the first part of the article again, speaking slower than usual and tapping the table with his knuckles

to give emphasis to each word, "dot vas your child. Dot vas her, mitout no mistake. You vill got dot child dis time, sure. Der is no more vat I don't got to say about it. I am so sure like dot."

"But I'd loike to know what he meant by sindin' me the message away off there?"

It was not until after a wakeful night that they finally guessed the truth. The similarity of the name of the town with the one in which they resided finally led them to believe that Porta had intended to notify Mike, but the operator had sent it to the wrong place. This of course only served to intensify the anguish of suspense. They could scarcely wait for the train to start for New York, where he might make connections for the West.

Hans found it impossible to leave, on account of other duties, but it was arranged that he should receive immediate information as soon as there was any to impart; and that until then nothing should be said to any one concerning this new trail. They had so many times been almost as confident, and had so many times been grievously disappointed, that they had learned to keep their own counsel. If those at the station, however, when the train moved away, had chanced to be at all familiar with the previous history of Mike, they would have had little need of much Yankee ingenuity in order to guess the present state of affairs. Hans hopped about like Barnum's fat boy at the sight of provisions.

"Good-by, mine friend," he exclaimed, standing in the car next to the seat where Mike had taken his place, grasping his hand with both of his for a farewell shake, when the conductor had cried "All aboard!" "By

chiminey, I never vas so happy in mine life before. Bring her back, Michael! Bring her back, und I laugh me vild mit joyness."

Hans, who was standing in the aisle while uttering these words, had not noticed that the train was moving out of the station. He had just time to push his way through the crowd of passengers, followed by the curses of an Irish laborer whose pipe he had accidentally knocked out of his mouth, and the howl of a Jenkinstown alderman whose bunion he had ground beneath his heel, and jump off the car. The velocity which it had already attained caused him to fall prostrate; but with spirits undisturbed, he rolled quickly over, in time to catch a farewell look at Mike, and reaching for his hat, which had fallen off, waved it triumphantly. Then he arose and brushed the dust off as best he could, unmindful alike of Ireland's wrongs or the insult he had just heaped upon the American flag. With his thoughts fixed on Katie, and making all kinds of plans for her reception, it seemed to him as though he were the happiest man in all the world.

## CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH NUMBER ONE INTERVIEWS THE RELICT OF NUMBER TWO.

WHEN Mike arrived at the little village of Jenkinstown it was late at night, so that any attempt to find Mrs. Barney at that hour was out of the question. Early the next morning he started in the direction of her house, which had been indicated to him by the proprietor of the hotel. It was the same house and the same woman which we saw on that day five years ago; possibly a little stouter, but with the same determination to coddle any new sensation until she had either killed it by squeezing it too hard, or it had entirely outgrown her affectionate embrace.

"Does the Widee Barney live here?" asked Mike, as the door was opened in response to his knock.

The "Widee Barney" looked at him for a moment as though trying to determine the character in which he appeared. She thought at first that he might be some newly-engaged agent of the landlord in search of the rent. Then, as she saw his long beard and white hair, she fancied he was some representative of a Catholic benevolent asylum asking for alms. She concluded that, in either case, it would be the safest way to forestall the possibility of a request to open her pocket-book by impressing upon her visitor the impossibility of attending to anything but her grief. This had been her attitude ever since the sad decease of her partner. There was only

one individual in the world for whom she was waiting that she might tender to him a different kind of a reception,—that was the reporter of the *Chicago Journal*, a copy of which periodical had been sent to her by one of those considerate persons who always furnish their friends with an account of every exasperating thing which is said about them.

"The Widee Barney?" she cried, lifting her apron to her face, dwelling upon the words lugubriously, and using a falsetto tone which sounded like an iron door creaking on its hinges. "Ah, yes, it is the Widee Barney, poor lone critter that she is, widout nobody to protect her no more. Little I thought the day would come whin I would be a widee. Ah, my poor Moike! He was the bouldest boy in all Jenkinstown, so he was."

"An' was he the one spoken of in this here article?" asked her visitor, producing the paper from his pocket. Mrs. Barney dropped her apron more quickly even than she had lifted it to her eyes, while her voice suddenly descended into her stomach:

"He the one spoken of in that 'ere article? An' what article is it?"

Mike handed her the paper; a glance at the head-line was enough to satisfy her. Her eyebrows became more lowering, and if there had been a deeper stomach than the one she owned, her voice showed a manifest tendency to go down into it. This was certainly not the agent; he was too polite. Neither was he a benevolent subscription collector; he was not polite enough. He must be a reporter.

"If I could get hould o' the one who spoke o' him in that there article I'd put a rosebud on the end o' his

nose, so I would." She began to gesticulate with her fist, and Mike saw that she was getting excited. He was now trembling with eagerness to get at the main question concerning his child. So he tried to bring her back to the subject by repeating his query.

"An' is this the Widee Barney?"

"An' didn't I tell ye it was the Widee Barney? Do you want me to spake it through an ear-trumpet? The idea o' writin' about a decent man that I ever played ball wid him, an' thin hung him over the clothes-horse to dhry! An' thin callin' him a nager! Och, the blatherskites! Callin' the decentest man that ever lived a nager in a wood-poile; an' puttin' it in that smooth spach loike that his poor widee never would ha' knowed the meanin' of it at all, at all, if Mrs. McGuinness hadn't taken her hands out o' her washin' to come here an' spind all the mornin' a readin' it to me."

During this speech her voice had been gradually climbing out of her stomach until it had reached the topmost notch in her head.

"I'd loike to spake wid ye," said her caller.

"An' what ha' ye been doin' but spakin' wid me? What's spakin' but spakin'? Perhaps ye think ye been singin' to me all this toime? An' thin sayin' that his widee got mad because she found there was another firm across the street! I got mad at 'em because they charged me five cents for carrots whin I could go to any other sthore in the whole town an' buy 'em for four. An' what if I did get mad at 'em? What business is it to the people in Chicago? Sure I'll pull the whole hair out o' their head if they ever lay a hand on my buoy agin. The idea of thim ever sayin' that my buoy ever

stuck a stick into the bung-hole o' the molasses barrel an' thin licked it off! The idea o' thim sayin' that, an' here I been thrashin' him almost every week ever since he was born."

"Can ye tell me anything about that little guirl?" cried Mike at last in desperation. It started the woman on a new train of feeling.

"That little guirl?" she answered, permitting her fist, which she had been swinging wildly, gradually to descend; "faith I think I can. Who are ye anyhow? Are ye one o' thim reporters from Chicago?"

"No, I ain't no reporter," he replied. "I'm a stranger in these parts, an' live in the East. But I knew of a little guirl that was lost about five years ago, an' I thought perhaps it moight be her. An' I saw that account in the paper, an' so I made up my moind that I would just see if you could tell me where she is."

Mrs. Barney's voice still remained in the top notch as she made response to this; it still sounded like an iron door creaking on its hinges, but with a more cheerful creak as it were; as though it were opening, not this time to let a prisoner in, but to let him out.

"Och, bless my soule! I thought you was one o' thim reporters. Come roight in wid ye, an' make yerself to home. What did I mane by keepin' ye standin' there so long at the door! Sit down wid ye, sit down!" So saying, she grasped her apron, which was accustomed to prove itself of practical utility in all departments, from that of a pocket-handkerchief to a wash-rag for little Mike, and dusted off a chair, to which she motioned her visitor. She was now as zealous in her hospitality toward the stranger as she formerly had been in her an-

tagonism; for a true Celt can never be deficient in demonstration. Even his fun must be of the Donnybrook order, and he cannot lay his friend under ground without having a clog-dance over his grave. During our rebellion they were the hardest troops to manage in the camp; but they were among the most intrepid fighters in the battle.

"An' where was it the despatch came from?" asked Mike, still standing, but having advanced inside the door. He was twirling his hat nervously in his hand, trying as well as he could to conceal his impatience. He desired to find the name of the place, that he might hurry on by the first train.

"It come from the man who had her," replied the woman. "Bad cess to him! Ah, but she was a schwate little thing! I'll niver forget to me dyin' day how she crawled up on my lap an' put her fat little arms around my neck. An' would ye belave it," she continued in a louder tone, as she saw Mike was about to interrupt her, "the dear little duck said to me, Did I loike Mrs. Felix? That was the woman that she was with. Ah, but she was an awful woman. I heard tell some fearful bad stories about her treatment of the choild. I did that; an' thim reporters sayin'——"

"What was the name of the place where the choild was?" cried Mike, by this time almost beside himself with impatience.

"Oh, the name of the place where the choild was? That was Belleville. It's only a few moile on the railroad between here an' Groveland. Ah, but that was a schwate choild! An' cunnin'?" lifting up her hands, throwing back her head, and looking sideways, as though

somebody was trying to dispute her assertion. "Och, cunnin' was no name for it. She——"

"How did she look?" exclaimed the other, eagerly.

"Look? Ah, she was an angel an' no mistake. She looked just schwate enough to eat, so she did. But the woman! Ah, ye ought to ha' seen the face on that woman. She was a bad'n; she was that, an' no mistake. Whin she saw me——"

"But how did this choild look?" cried Mike, more earnestly than before. "What was the color of her hair and eyes; an' how tall was she? Was she more than six years old?"

"Well, I should say she was just about six year old. She had beautiful golden ringlets, an' they came way down to her shoulders. And her laugh was that schwate that it sounded for all the world loike the bells in the staple in ould Limerick."

"Did she say anything about her father an' mother?"

"She said the man she was with, an' who left her all alone there in the midst o' strangers, was her uncle,—bad cess to him,—an' that her father was comin' for her pretty soon, but I've heard tell he niver came. They must ha' been a bad lot. An' that her mother was drounded in a big boat, an'——"

Mike could bear it no longer. Trembling with eagerness at the thought that now, at last, he was, after so many disappointments, on the very eve of meeting his child, he asked only a few more questions in reference to the directions to be taken, and leaving the woman in the midst of a harangue, he hurried away, not even turning to answer when she, with her arms akimbo, shouted to him from the front step, "What name moight she call him?"

Before noon he had reached the little village of Belleville. It was winter, and just such a day as that on which Jane and the friendless little waif had taken their memorable walk through those very streets, which now, at last, the sorrow-stricken father trod himself. There was the white snow gathered on the trees; and as he looked off toward the country road, the great drifts were covering the fences, just as they had seen it five years ago. He looked about him, and his heart beat violently as he thought to himself,—

"She's walked these very streets, an' she's looked at these very houses an' trees I'm lookin' at now."

He wondered whether she would know him, and if she would be much changed herself. At last he could see not far from him the hotel. He did not need to ask the way to it, for the directions which he had received from the woman had been sufficiently explicit, and from her description he recognized it at once. And that was where his little Katie had been living all these desolate years! He almost dreaded the shock of meeting her, now that the moment was so near. He halted for a minute on his cane, in order to collect himself. Then the vague hints he had received from the woman of his child having suffered caused him to forget all else except the thought that now he was to clasp her in his arms once more, and never be separated from her again. Impatient of all delay, he hurried forward. At last he had reached the gate. Her fingers had opened it during these years! The thought made him unconsciously clasp it more firmly, as though he could feel the pressure of her hand as he drew back the latch. He passed up the walk and felt a little dizzy as he lifted the heavy iron knocker.

"Is Mrs. Felix in?" he asked, when the door was opened.

"Mrs. Felix don't live here."

"Where does she live?" he exclaimed, almost fiercely.

"I don't know; she moved away almost two years ago."

"An' the choild! Did she take the choild wid her?"

"What child?"

He staggered back. True enough, how should they know?

"Oh, do you mean the child she used to beat?"

"Yes, the choild!" he cried. "The choild!"

"Oh, no, she didn't take her with her. They left before we came here, so I don't know anything about it myself; but I've heard the neighbors say she ran off one night, with a girl they used to have, called Jane. The girl was very kind-hearted and loved her, so she'd do anything for her; and the child loved the girl; but for some reason the woman seemed to have a hatred of it, and would strike it whenever she got a chance. But Jane used to stand up for it. The story is, that one day when the old woman thought Jane was away, she became very angry at the child, who had displeased her in some way, and so took her up-stairs, and, taking off her dress, began to beat her on her bare shoulders with a great strap. The girl came home unexpectedly, though, and hearing the cries, ran up, and in her rage just beat the old woman with a stick until she couldn't move. Then she took the strap and just lashed her, as she'd been lashing the child, till she was all black and blue. That night she took Katie,—that was the child's name,—and nobody knew where they went. Then when the story

became known the neighbors began to inquire into things, so that it got too hot around here for Mrs. Felix, and she had to leave."

"An' don't nobody know where this young woman is?"

"Well, it's two years ago since she left. It seems to me I did hear that she was in the city of Groveland; but I'm pretty positive nobody knows anything more about her than that. Oh, yes; I think I heard also that she was sick."

"An' the choild?"

"Well, what became of the child I couldn't say."

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## CHAPTER X.

### ALONE IN A STRANGE CITY.

"It's a shame to lie to Arnold," said the students at Rugby; "he always believes a fellow." The man or woman who, in dealing with those under their control, "always believes a fellow," has discovered one prime requisite toward giving to the world "fellows" who are worth believing. The surest method of educating a child to become a rascal is to always suspect him of being one. Let him know that we expect him to be hung, or to be worthy of it, and ten to one he will do his best not to disappoint us.

So that it was not strange that with the distrustful eye of Mrs. Felix ever fixed upon her, Katie, first led into falsehood by force of fear, should soon become confirmed

in it by force of habit. In the moral, or, rather, immoral atmosphere of such persons, it seems to a child at least a part of the divinely-appointed order of things to lie. True, Jane was ever cautioning her, in very solemn language, to adhere strictly to the truth, and all the more as she saw the tendency to depart from it.

"Don't you never tell a whopper," she would say, shaking her head solemnly, and enlarging her eyes until they looked like a couple of miniature port-holes in the side of a ship, with a diminutive Chinaman looking through each,—"never, no, never, just so long as you live! It's awful."

As she usually took occasion to impart these valuable precepts at such times as they were strolling off into the country on Sunday afternoons, when the "ole 'oman" believed, or at least believed that she believed, that they were in the Sabbath-school (for that is as near to a positive conviction as some folks can arrive at when considering the merits of other people), and as these moral injunctions were intermingled with sundry cautions as to the best manner of allaying all suspicion of their truantship on their return home, the crop which developed from this seed, so carefully planted, was not as prolific as might perhaps have been expected by the average parent or guardian. Gradually she became almost as much an adept in the art of deception as Jane herself; only she never deceived Jane: Jane trusted her, why, then, should she deceive her?

As to the girl herself and her relations to her mistress, she soon relapsed, after the momentary self-assertion already related, into her ordinary condition of grumbling obedience. She had become so accustomed to being bul-

lied that she even had felt a little uncomfortable, after the first excitement of her triumph had passed away, at the semi-respectful tones in which she had been addressed for a day or two by Mrs. Felix. That woman had come in a degree to respect her; for she had learned to fear her, and there can be no respect where there is not a certain measure of fear. But before very long the old relations were virtually re-established. Occasionally the girl's eye would strike fire, and her voice assume a tone of defiance; but this was never at her own wrongs. At such times Mrs. Felix would become instantly subdued, and would only remark,—

"Well, take the gell yourself, then, an' see if you can make anything of her. For my part I never did see such a little hypocrite in all my born days." Having thus covered her retreat, she would pass out of the room as quickly as possible. When she returned in an hour or two the tempest would be over, and the girl once more submissive to any amount of indignity.

One of the saddest facts in connection with a crushed childhood, as Jane's had been, is that the victim either rises against it in her indignation, and becomes for life a social rebel, like George Sand, or, where the crushing process is successful, goes limping like a cripple with a bent spine down to the grave. Who that is acquainted with human nature cannot recognize such a one as he passes him in the street? How much better to bury a child than to "break his will"! Train it; strengthen it; show him how to guard it; it will be the very trellis to his character; and respect him, if you would have him respect himself.

Of course there was a difference, to a very limited extent, in Jane's manner toward her mistress. The horse

which has once succeeded in running away never can be brought into exactly the same condition of subjection as before, partly on account of the cowardice of the driver, and partly because of the newly-acquired sense of power in the beast. Mrs. Felix lived in constant expectancy that her filly would break the traces. But with rare exceptions there was little cause for apprehension; her spirit had been too thoroughly broken years before.

As the woman's fear of Jane increased, so did her hatred of the child whom Jane so evidently loved. The very fact that she no longer dared to strike her, save on rare occasions when her protector chanced to be away, led her to invent a thousand petty methods by which to make her life unhappy. Many times Jane went without her supper that she might save the meagre dole which her mistress had apportioned to her, for the child, who had been sent, for some trifling offence, supperless to bed.

"Here, little one," she would say, as she crept quietly into the garret room, where the child lay sobbing in the darkness, "you shall have somethin' to eat, so you shall; an' you won't have to stay here alone very long, either. Jane 'll play off sick to the old 'oman, an' we'll have a nice time snugglin' up close together, an' you shall go to sleep on Jane's arm, an' she'll tell you a nice long story all about when she was a little gell, an' how she used to get lickin's an' run away; an' how after a while she got so she found it didn't do no good to run away, 'cause the cop 'd catch her an' bring her back, an' she'd only get a worse lickin' than afore. An' how after a good while she didn't care, an' let 'em lick an' be blowed. It didn't do her no good. But nobody shall wollop you, not when Jane's around."

The child would cease her sobbing and become quite still while listening to this oft-repeated story. Jane was a genuine heroine in her eyes, and had led quite a life of adventure; it seemed quite like a mark of distinction to have been arrested by a "cop," though she shuddered as she thought of it. Thus almost three years passed away, until the crisis arrived to which reference has already been made.

Jane's aunt, the only living relative whom she knew, had died in Groveland, and she had gone away to attend the funeral, expecting to be absent for several days. The hatred which had been dammed up for so long a time in Mrs. Felix's breast now burst its embankment, and poor Katie found herself helpless and friendless in the black and sweeping torrent. It might be supposed that Mr. Felix would have interfered, but he was away from home; and even if he had been in his accustomed place, sitting beside the stove in the bar-room, half stupid with drink, it is very doubtful whether he would have uttered any protest against whatever his spouse wanted to do. He had for too long a time been under her dominance to interfere with anything.

The child, now nine years old, was compelled to rise and build the fires, sweep the rooms, and do whatever else her mistress ordered. The third day after Jane's departure, the woman commanded Katie to bring upstairs a pail of water. She went out to the well, and, having filled her pail, tried to carry it. She had not gone far before she set it down in very exhaustion; her fingers were numb and her back ached. She looked helplessly about her and began to cry; she could not return with it, and she did not dare to return without it. A pile

of wood was heaped up near where she stood, and an axe lay not far from it. Here was her opportunity; if there was no pail she could bring no water. She grasped the axe, and, having emptied the bucket, broke it, with a few strokes, into many pieces. These she carefully hid, and going in to her mistress, told her that she could find nothing in which to bring the water. Now it happened that the woman had been watching her from the window when she started with the pail in her hand. She knew therefore that she uttered a falsehood, and told her so, seizing her at the same time by the shoulder, and with violent shaking threatening all kinds of disasters in case she did not immediately tell the truth. The child, who was becoming better drilled in the art of deception, remained for some time stout in her denials; finally, after repeated blows from the woman, she admitted having misrepresented the facts, but declared that it had fallen to pieces in her hands as she was trying to bring in the water.

"Where are the pieces?" cried the woman.

"I don't know," said the child, having made no provision for meeting this question. Search was instituted, and at last they were found, where Katie had stowed them away.

"Oh, you little lying hypocrite! Just what I've always said of you. You broke it with that axe, did you? I always knew how you'd turn out, an' always said so too. But I'll do my duty by you, anyhow."

The reader already knows the rest. The woman took the strap which had lain idle since the hour of Katie's rescue by Jane, and having stripped the child's shoulders bare, began to expend her fury and hatred upon her. Jane had felt a hesitation about leaving her charge at all,

and had only decided to go after repeated injunctions to the child "not to make the old 'oman mad." During her absence, however, her solicitude had increased to such a degree that she found herself compelled to return earlier than she had anticipated. The shrieks of Katie as she approached the house had caused her to lose all thought of consequences; and rushing into the room where the barbarity was being perpetrated, her muscular strength being increased by her fury, she snatched Katie from the grasp of her persecutor, and, having laid her on the bed, turned with the howl of a maniac on the woman. Mrs. Felix tried to escape; but she might as well have tried to escape a decree of fate. Wrenching the strap from her hand, the girl, scarcely knowing what she did, hurled her to the floor, and standing over her, her eyes on fire and her whole aspect like that of a person madly insane, beat her with the buckled end. It was in vain for the other to lift her scrawny fingers to try to avert the blows. Jane only ceased when, wearied with the effort, she could proceed no longer. The woman had fainted. She was a pitiable object as she lay there, covered with blood, her eyes shut and her arms extended on the floor. Jane did not notice her; she did not even see her. She had been blind with rage, and now her attention was turned entirely toward the child. Taking her into the kitchen, she washed her bruises, and then carried her up to her bed, and after quickly undressing her laid her down to rest.

By this time she thought of Mrs. Felix. She stood still and listened, but there was no sound of movement in the room below. Her heart beat violently, for the suspicion flashed across her mind that she had killed her.

Hurrying down, she entered the apartment. It was indeed a horrible sight which met her gaze; the woman had not moved or become conscious, but her head was lying in a little pool of blood, which was soaking into her hair.

Now the girl's fury gave place to remorse and pity, as no response was returned to the eager words by which she sought to arouse her. Quickly she brought some water and began to wipe away the blood. Lifting the stained head with its matted hair into her lap, she bathed the forehead, and looked anxiously for some signs of consciousness. At last the eyes opened languidly, and fixed themselves with a listless, dreamy expression on Jane's face.

"Can I do anything for you?" asked the girl, tenderly, as she bent over her.

The question seemed to arouse the woman, and she whispered, "Water! Bring me water."

Jane pressed some water to her lips, and gradually she revived enough to enable the girl to assist her to bed. It was a trying hour; her fears magnified every symptom of danger, and as she sat by the bedside of her patient, the darkness slowly deepening about her, her imagination portrayed all the evils which might result. Whenever the woman groaned, the girl would start in terror, and if for a time she lay quietly in a half doze, her heart would beat even more violently, lest she might be slipping away into the sleep of death. The awful thought possessed her: what if she were a murderess! At every creaking of the door she fancied it might be the sound of approaching footsteps to arrest her. Once or twice she stepped to the window to look out, and

when she saw no one, she felt for the time reassured. Then she crept noiselessly down the stairs and pushed all the bolts and fastened the windows. When she came back the woman was breathing heavily, and she slammed the door to see whether it would awaken her; and when it did, and she half turned on her side and groaned again, she fancied she could hear it followed by the death-rattle in her throat. She lit the lamp and bent anxiously over the unconscious form. An ugly scar marked the temple, which lay exposed to view by the woman's having turned her head. Jane took up the strap and examined the buckle; it was very much heavier than she had supposed. What if Mrs. Felix should die, and she should be hung, and Katie be left with no protectress in all the world! As the hours passed by, the horrible thought grew upon her. What should she do? Summon aid and go for the doctor? But then everything would become known. Finally the suspense became so great that she could bear it no longer; she determined what she would do.

The gray dawn of the morning was just beginning to break as she passed noiselessly up the stairs and knelt by the side of the slumbering child. She had examined her before to discover the extent of her injuries, and had become convinced that they were only slight, as she had fortunately arrived when the first few blows were being given; but she now examined her wounds again and more carefully.

"I think she can bear it; an' if she can, anything 'll be better'n this," she whispered.

The child slept on, unawakened by the girl's tender touch. Jane busied herself with packing her things

and those of Katie away in the long box which served her for a trunk. Then leaving her undisturbed, she descended to the kitchen, and hastily prepared as hearty a meal as she could with the provisions at hand, interrupting herself in her work only to step to the side of Mrs. Felix occasionally to minister to her wants. When all was finished, she hastened out to secure the services of a neighboring farmer to carry her trunk to the station. Then she wrote a note to a young woman living in the village, telling her the circumstances of her mistress's sickness, and informing her of her intention of leaving the place. "She won't blow on me," she muttered, as she placed the note in an envelope and directed it. "She'll be here to take care o' the poor old 'oman; an' if she dies," and her heart beat violently at the thought, "why, she won't bone on me. She'll put the cops off the track."

She folded up another note to the physician, simply telling him that Mrs. Felix was seriously ill, and requesting him to visit her immediately. These she placed in the post-office; for she knew the mail would be distributed immediately after the departure of the train which should bear her and Katie away. To the citizens of Belleville it was as it is to the citizens of every small village; the event of the day was the distribution of the mail. People whose creaking boots would every Sunday announce their late arrival at the village church would be on hand each work-day morning, very early, to see the leather bag brought in, and join the crowd of young and old who pressed about the little window when the slide went up and the letters were distributed.

Having made these preparations, she awoke Katie

and dressed her hurriedly in the best clothes she had. There was a certain mystery connected with Jane's movements which aroused the curiosity of the child, but when Jane bade her not to ask any questions and to be very quiet, she obeyed at once.

"Here," she said, tenderly, as she placed some water by the side of Mrs. Felix, after that person had moderately partaken of the toast and tea which she had prepared, "I didn't sleep much last night, an' so I'll call the doctor an' Betsy Gamin to wait on you while I take a rest. I'll just step out, an' they'll be here afore very long. Good-by."

She passed out of the room, then turned for a moment to look back. She came once more and stood by the bedside. She had little to remember which was pleasant of the woman she was about to leave forever; the years in that home had been hard, bitter years of unrequited toil; and yet there had been times during those weary months when the woman in Mrs. Felix's nature had awakened from slumber, and for a moment had spoken tender words and performed gentle deeds before relaxing into sleep again. Few hearts are so hard but that, under the inspiration of a divine touch, water may gush from the rock, even in the wilderness. True, these times had been very rare: once when Jane was sick, and once again when she herself was sick; but nevertheless they had been. And filled with remorse for what she had done, and with a dumb dull ache at thus leaving the scenes with which she had become familiar, the girl looked with tear-dimmed eyes on that old pinched face, and before she turned away lifted the hand to her lips and kissed it.

The child did not ask to see the woman, and Jane did not suggest it. Sadly they passed out of the door, scarce knowing whither they went, only knowing they were leaving behind them days of sorrow and darkness, the memory of which could never be effaced. They and the woman who might have filled their existence with gladness were now separating forever. She had left her mark upon them, as we are leaving ours upon those who touch our garments every day. It might have been a star of glory; alas, it was a scar of shame. But whatever it was, it was there; and neither she nor God, in this life surely, could change it now.

The old gate seemed to speak to them and say good-by, as it rattled after them when they passed through. The trees seemed to bend their branches as though in farewell salutation; and as Jane looked back when the train was gliding out of the station, it was with a pang that she realized she should never see those streets again.

"Where are we going?" Katie ventured to ask, looking up into her face. It was an unexpected question; she had scarcely stopped to ask herself that. But it drew her attention away from the past, and set her busily at work in planning for the future. She summoned all the courage which she could, and answered,—

"We're goin' to live by ourselves, darlin'; an' you shan't hear no more cross words an' get no more lickin's. An' you won't have to build no more fires nor bring no more pails o' water; but Jane 'll do all the work. An' you shall go to school an' learn all them things in the books, an' grow up to be a lady." The child clapped her hands, and the old-womanish look of care disappeared from her young face as she cried,—

"Oh, Jane, is that true? And won't we never have to go back to Mrs. Felix's, and are we going to live together always and always?"

"Yes, little one; always an' always."

The whole bearing of the child was changed. Many a time, when she had gone sobbing with her sorrows to her only friend, had the story of those wondrous times which should be in the dim future caused her to forget her grief, and to fall into happy dreams, sitting in Jane's lap with her head resting on her shoulder. Now it was all to be realized! Pauline never saw brighter visions under the spell of Claude Melnotte's words than she had when listening to the soothing utterances of her Claude, —Jane.

When they reached the city, they had a little money which the girl had saved from the expenses of her former trip. They did not waste much time in looking about them, but with that self-reliance which is likely to characterize people who from early childhood have been thrown on their own resources, she soon had procured a room for a moderate sum, and, leaving Katie asleep, had gone forth looking for work.

She did not find it the first day, nor the second, but she kept her disappointment to herself; and when the child, as they sat at their supper, asked her why she did not take some of the good things she had brought home, she only answered with a smile that she was not hungry, and kept on eating her bread with the smallest amount of butter, leaving untouched the tempting buns and herrings, lest there should not be enough for both.

"If you were alone, we could easily find you a situation," people said to her to whom she applied and stated

her case. From every such suggestion she simply turned away without a sigh. The one bright spot in her life was this little child whom she had learned to love; her chief joy, the joy of sacrificing for her. Once or twice other suggestions were made to her, which made her cheek burn and her eyes flash; but she only hastened away without saying a word, lest she might say too much. Late in the afternoon of the third day she found some work.

"Have you a machine?" they asked.

"No."

"Then the only thing we can give you is hand-made button-holes for shirts. We pay three cents a dozen for them."

"Very well," she answered. So she took them home, and sat up late into the night, that she might if possible earn enough to pay for the meals for the next day. When at last she laid down her work and went to bed, she found she had made forty-eight, by which she earned twelve cents.

After a few such days of starving toil, she found that she could never earn enough in this way to feed them both. So, at the suggestion of her employers, she determined to purchase a machine, on the condition that she should pay a certain amount each month until the debt was liquidated. She hoped that this might help her, for though she had worked regularly ten hours a day, she had found it very hard to provide even the few bare necessities which they required.

She felt quite rich now, and cheerful as she sat singing at her sewing in her little room. She was making winter overcoats, and for each one received thirty-five cents; not a very large sum, but by working ten hours a day,

and sometimes twelve, she succeeded in not only supplying food, but some pretty little garments for Katie, that she might be able to go to school. Thus the child was very happy, and that made Jane happy. When Katie's birthday came, she was able to buy her a bird; a real live canary. True, the cage was a very simple one, only the square wooden little prison in which Dickey had been imported; but his notes were just as sweet as though they had rippled forth from between gilded bars. One Sunday, shortly after they had come to the city, the bells were ringing for morning worship.

"What church is that?" asked Katie.

"I don't know. I guess it's Episcopalian or Methodist." Jane looked at the child as she said this, and continued, as though a new thought had entered her mind: "Katie, you ought to go to Sunday-school. Don't you want to go to Sunday-school?"

"No," said the little one, stoutly, "I don't."

"But the folks there ain't all like Mrs. Felix," persisted Jane, beginning to feel her responsibility for the moral training of her charge. "There are some awful nice people in them Sunday-schools, I guess."

Finally they resolved that they would attend the service at the church; and when the invitation was given for strangers to remain to the session of the school, which was immediately to follow, Jane whispered,—

"You stay, darlin'; I'll go home an' get ready the dinner."

But Katie absolutely refused to remain alone; so Jane, notwithstanding her old dress, which was the real reason why she had hesitated, stayed with her, and they went into the school together.

Katie felt that she never had seen such a beautiful woman as the one who taught the class that day. Her voice was very musical and low, and when she looked at her, she thought of the angel she had seen in her dream long ago; only that was a child's face, and this was a woman's.

"And who is this little girl?" asked the lady, smiling, and stooping to kiss her rosy lips.

"Her name is Katie," answered Jane; and then indistinctly recalling the name of Signor Porta, who had brought her to Belleville, she added, "Katie Porter. I'm—I'm—I'm her nurse-girl." She wanted to say "sister," but as she looked down at her old clothes she thought, "No, I won't disgrace her."

Never a mother looked with more genuine pride on her child than this untaught girl, whom everybody had once called hard, whose higher faculties had all lain dormant until awakened by the magic touch of love, now looked on Katie as she stood in her rosy, happy childhood, dressed in her pretty frock.

The next Sabbath the child needed no urging to go alone. It was the happiest anticipation which she had,—the prospect of meeting Mrs. Russell. Thus every Sunday, when it came, found her in her place, with her Bible in her hand which Jane had bought her.

It was wonderful, the change which was wrought in a few months in her face and manner. Once more there was the free, merry laugh; the careworn, frightened expression, which had fast been growing fixed, gradually faded away, and in its stead there shone again the merry twinkle of unrepressed childhood. Sometimes their meals were very scant, and they were compelled to prac-

tise many devices by which they sought to make one penny serve the purpose of two; they had very few of what most people feel to be the requisites of happiness; but it is surprising how much joy can be gotten out of a little where there dwells a holy love and pure intent. Daniel's den of lions becomes a palace because of the presence of the Unseen; while because of that same presence, the palace of the conscience-burdened king becomes a den. The same voice whispers Peace to one, which to the other mutters War! A mighty truth worth thinking of; that "God is love," and "God is a consuming fire"; but not because He changes. It is we who change; and according to the relation which we bear to Him, He is one of these to us. If I permit the roots of my infant orchard to be planted in the earth, and their branches to reach out toward the sun, the sun is love. If I invert nature, and, rooting up my trees, seek to make them grow toward the earth and away from the sun, they wither in a day; the very sun becomes a consuming fire. Not what thou art, O God; but what I am! Thou wilt be on my side, if I am on thine!

Thus two years passed away. Katie's fairy dreams were being realized. Jane's promise was being fulfilled which she had made: "We're goin' to live by ourselves, darlin'; an' you shan't hear no more cross words an' get no more lickin's. An' you won't have to build no more fires nor bring no more pails o' water; but Jane 'll do all the work. An' you shall go to school an' learn all them things in the books, an' grow up to be a lady."

The child, to whom the memory of those years with

Mrs. Felix was a constant nightmare, appreciated her opportunities more than she otherwise could have done; and having inherited the bright intellect of her mother with the sterling qualities of her father, her progress in her classes was rapid, and by the time of which we speak she was running an even race with those of her own age in the way of mental development. Her love for Jane, and the silent influence of Mrs. Russell, had called forth again the sweet trustfulness of her disposition, which had been fast becoming snowed under beneath the chilling influences of her former life. Little by little they had been able to purchase some adornments for the room; first a carpet, then a lounge, then, after several months, with the closest economy, some cheap lace curtains and a few pictures.

"I don't care much for them kind o' things myself, 'cause I never been used to 'em; but Katie 'll never be a lady unless she has 'em." Thus Jane would mutter to herself, according to her old fashion, when the weariness of the extra hours was more severe than usual.

The window was so situated that the sun shone in in the morning; and often, when the child would be awakened by the chattering of the sparrows outside and the answering notes of Dickey within, while hopping upon his perch, she would lie and think of the difference between her past life and her present. And then it would seem that there never had been any one so happy in all the world before. And she would look out over the housetops, through the prettily draped window, and wonder whether the heaven which Mrs. Russell told about could be any more beautiful than that little room, with the sunlight, and the curtains, and the bright

carpet, and the bird, and, more than all besides, with Jane.

The patient girl, as she bent over the machine, grew into the habit of listening for the child's tripping footstep in the hallway on her return from school, and her cheery musical voice when she opened the door.

A day came at last, however, when Katie was more quiet than usual as she sat rocking, after school, in the little chair which Jane had bought for her. She held the cage on her lap, and appeared for a time to be listening to the singing of the bird. The girl sat opposite to her and, busy with her sewing, did not for a long time look up from the machine; when she did, she noticed the child's eyes fixed intently on her.

"What's the matter, darlin'?" she asked, stopping her work.

"Nothing," replied the other, looking down at the bird.

"You feel happy, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, very happy; I could be happy anywhere with you, Jane." She laid down the cage, and came and stood with her arm about the girl's neck. Presently she added, looking up into her face, "I never saw you look so white before. It must be very hard for you to work so long; when I wake up in the morning you're sewing, and when I go to bed at night you're sewing just the same. You don't look as you used to. God wouldn't let you get sick and die and leave me all alone, would He, Jane?"

Alas, the awful suspicion which she had been seeking to hide even from herself could be no longer bidden down. At last even the child had come to notice the

hollow cheeks and the sunken eyes. With a passionate, despairing love, she flung her arms about the neck of her idol and burst into tears.

"No, darlin'," she tried to say, "God will not separate us; He cannot; He is too good." But a paroxysm of coughing prevented her speech, so that she could not finish the sentence.

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## CHAPTER XI.

INTRODUCING TWO PEOPLE WHOSE HOME IS VERY NEAR HEAVEN: UP ON THE TOP FLOOR OF A TENEMENT.

In the next room to theirs there lived a little doubled-up cobbler, who had been for so many years bending over his work that even when he walked he carried the sign of his occupation with him. With his crooked back and round shoulders, and his shambling legs, he looked like a good-sized interrogation-point, only that he had limbs where the dot should have been. He was a very kind old man, and very industrious. He had the queerest-looking little woman for a wife. She was shaped very much like himself, only on a smaller scale. Crooked and bent as he was, with slightly finer features, she appeared somewhat like a second edition, revised and improved. They were one in heart, and while they did not appear to have many friends or seem to care for many, so completely were they bound up in one another, they were very kind towards those of their neighbors who were

sick or in any sort of trouble. They were very poor, and only had two rooms, one of which served as a bedroom, and the other as a kitchen and dining-room and sitting-room and shop all combined.

Still, she generally found enough to keep her busy, and so was very happy as she went bustling about her work all day long. From morning till night, except the half-hour which he allowed for lunch, the occasional sound of his little hammer could be distinctly heard. Sometimes he varied the music with a song in a broken tone, yet very cheery. His repertoire was not very large, but it made little difference. Sometimes it would be the half-forgotten snatches of an old love-ditty, such as Peggy and he were accustomed to sing together long, long ago, before trouble had drawn any wrinkles in their foreheads or age had cracked their voices. One especially which he loved to croon over to himself (looking up occasionally at the bent form, which, withered though it was, seemed still the perfection of womanly beauty to him) was one which he had once found in the corner of a newspaper and committed to memory:

"Oh, lay thy hand in mine, dear!
We're growing old;
But Time hath brought no sign, dear,
That hearts grow cold.
'Tis long, long since our new love
Made life divine;
But age enricheth true love
Like noble wine.

"Oh, lean thy life on mine, dear!
'Twill shelter thee.
Thou wert a winsome vine, dear,
On my young tree:

And so, till boughs are leafless
And song-birds flown,
We'll twine, then lay us, griefless,
Together down."

At other times he would hum over a portion of an evening hymn, keeping time with his little hammer meanwhile; and early in the morning or late at night Jane and Katie could hear him through the thin partition singing with the same monotonous cadence,—

"Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

"Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close."

These people were very kind to the two friendless girls. They did not have much to give them except sympathy, and occasionally some soup, or rice, or toasted bread. But such as it was they gave it to them gladly, and many times, when Jane had been too sick to sew and the money was all spent, the simple fare which they divided with them was like the angel's food which came to Elijah in the wilderness, just ready to die. They did not see very much of the old man; he was not comfortable in "society," and always felt abashed in the presence of "women folks," all except Peggy. He often wondered how it was that he had ever mustered courage to propose to her, and with a quiet smile would assure her that he never could have done it at all if she had not

come more than half-way. He was so very busy, moreover, that he had little time to call on his neighbors; but she went in more and more frequently as Jane's sickness became more serious. And through his singing, and the industrious tap, tap, tap, which fell upon their ears at intervals all day long, they came to know him, and to feel toward him quite like an old friend, though they had never seen him but once, and then he was so embarrassed that he did not look up, but simply kept his eyes fixed on his work, while, instead of visiting, he caused his little hammer to sound more industriously than ever, tap, tap, tap, tap,—tap, tap, tap, tap.

The shadows had begun to deepen about these two friendless girls. Jane's cough had become worse, and she knew she was not so strong as she had been. The hours in which she could work were fewer, and the wages, which had never been large, were smaller than ever now.

Added to this there came another trouble. Her machine had almost been paid for; thus far she had not been a day behind in her instalments, and only three dollars more remained against her account, and then it would be hers. The price was fifty-five dollars, and she had paid fifty-two. But when she went to offer them the last instalment they refused to take it, because it was six days too late. She could not help crying when they spoke harshly to her and pretended to be very angry, accusing her of trying to cheat them. It filled her with terror, the thought of losing, now in her sickness, her only hope of support for herself and Katie. All that she had paid thus far they had received under the name of "rent," in order that they might profit by any failure

to meet her payments punctually. She knew in a vague way that it was not right, but when she continued to plead with them they only shook in her face the "lease," which she had signed at their bidding, and told her they were not a charitable organization, formed for the benefit of those who did not pay their debts when due. There was the writing; she herself had signed it; she had broken the agreement, and they should take the machine. She would still have lingered, but they drove her off, telling her that their shop "was no place for women to stand around in and blubber; they paid their rent promptly, and they proposed to use their premises for other purposes."

She cried all the way home; she could not help it. Fortunately, it was a dark night and very stormy, so that people had no time nor inclination to scan this young woman, sobbing under her breath along the streets, and they could not have seen her tears if they had.

She had a bad spell of coughing when she reached home, and this brought to her side Peggy from the next room. She needed a friend; our troubles seldom seem so great when we can tell them to some one else. It is the sorrow we must stifle which breaks our heart. Katie was asleep, so the poor girl was able to unburden her anguish. Peggy of course was very indignant, and went hobbling in to tell the story to old Sandy, who was just then singing to himself,—

"No chilling winds, or poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

"When shall I reach that happy place,
And be forever blest?
When shall I see my Father's face,
And in His bosom rest?"

Jane noticed that the steady tapping of the little hammer ceased, and the old man stopped his singing in the middle of the last line. Not that she intentionally listened, but she heard these sounds, and marked their cessation, just as we all of us, in any hopeless despair, are unconsciously attracted by little things taking place about us. She heard Peggy repeating the story in earnest tones. Then there was a conversation in a lower voice which she could not hear. Soon the old man was heard rising from his seat and shuffling across the floor. She caught the rattling sound of the ill-fitting bureau-drawer which was being opened.

Presently Peggy came in with her wrinkled old face full of smiles, and said she need not worry; Sandy had thought of a way out of their trouble. They had five dollars laid by, which they should not need for a long time, and if Jane would let them they would like to lend her the money, and she should offer it in addition to the sum which was due. That certainly would make all amends for the delay. Peggy never intended to receive it back again; that pretence was only a little artifice to induce the girl to accept it; neither did she tell of how the money had been gathered together and laid away, almost penny by penny, in order that Sandy might be able to purchase a new set of tools, of which he was beginning sorely to feel the need. So Jane accepted it, after considerable hesitation, and, kissing Peggy good-night, went to bed, anxiously questioning within herself

what the next day might bring forth. The tapping of the hammer was again heard in the next room, and as she was sinking away into slumber the old man's voice lulled her to sleep, while he continued his singing,—

"Filled with delight, my raptured soul
Can here no longer stay;
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless I'd launch away."

The next morning when the men came, and she saw the wagon stop at the door, her heart beat rapidly, for the little hope which she had been able to summon on the previous evening seemed suddenly to forsake her now.

"This is the room," they said, when they had reached the landing outside her door. Her heart beat more rapidly than before as she received them.

Three men entered, and the same voice said, "That's it over there, boys. Sorry to trouble you, young woman, but business is business." And he bowed very low.

Her hopes sank lower than ever now; that glossy, unctuous tone indicated no mercy in the metallic heart which lay behind it. The owner was gaudily dressed in a suit of large plaid, and wore a red necktie. He looked as though in his circle he might be quite a beau. He wore his hat jauntily on the side of his head, and held the stump of a cigar in his mouth, oblivious apparently to the propriety of removing either. While making his remarks he kept on smoking with an assumed air of nonchalance. His coarse black hair was thick with pomatum, his countenance tawny, and he possessed of that oleaginous appearance which is so characteristic

of the fop in low life. He was the member of the firm who sold the machines, having been selected for that office on account of his supposed grace and winning manners.

When Jane offered him the extra amount of money he bowed very low again, and assured her that he was very sorry that he could not take it, but business was business. With a pleading voice she reminded him of his promises at the time of the purchase, that in case she should find it difficult to make the payments promptly, the firm would be very willing to wait a few days. But with still another very low bow he stated that he had no recollection of having made such a promise; and that if he had, he had no authority to do so, because everything in such cases had to be decided by the written documents; and here were the papers which she herself had signed. So far as he was concerned, he would be willing to do anything he could to help her, but there were others besides himself in the firm, and he was sure they would not consent, "because, as she knew, business was business."

She might have told him of how hard she had worked, and of her many self-denials in order to meet the payments she had made; but she did not, and it would have done no good if she had. Men like those with whom she dealt, who feast upon the necessities of the poor,—such men as are living and doing this very thing, by one plan or another, in every large city to-day,—do not care for one or two broken hearts more or less. Business is business, you know.

So they took away her machine, and she went back to sewing button-holes in shirts for three cents a dozen.

She tried hard to summon her ambition once more, but from that time hope began to fade. It was seldom she smiled now, except in a forced way, and for Katie's sake. Work as she would, the fingers, which had never been very nimble, could not earn enough to pay the rent and meet their modest wants. At last she became so ill that she could sit up no longer, so she would have them prop her up with pillows in her bed, and thus she tried to perform her task. One day she had a coughing spell more severe than before, and this was followed by a hemorrhage. It left her very weak and pale, and then it became evident that she could not work any more.

She lay awake all night crying and thinking of Katie; but the next day the child seemed so hopeful and contented that Jane found their positions reversed, and instead of feeling the necessity of imparting courage, she found herself resting upon the courage and strength of her little attendant; and as the days passed by, the self-reliance and wisdom of the child grew upon her. It was several weeks since Katie had left school, but, though it was a terrible disappointment, she tried never to let Jane know it. She was only eleven years of age now, but she seemed much older than that; there is nothing which matures a child so rapidly as trouble. She had even gone out looking for work, but no one wanted any help; times were very slack, they said, and they had all the hands they needed. Notwithstanding this, her courage did not fail her.

"No matter, Jane," she would say when, one after another, the things which they had purchased with so much pride and pleasure disappeared under the three golden balls of the pawnbroker's shop,—"no matter; my

teacher says that God is very good, and that He will take care of everybody who tries to love Him; and we're trying real hard, aren't we, Jane?"

"Yes, darlin'," the girl would answer, in a weak voice. She did feel it a great deal, however, when she had to part with Dickey. It was not until almost all the other things had gone that she could bring herself to think of this. She had had him almost two years, and he was a birthday gift. Every morning she had fed him, and had spent many a happy hour after school playing with him and listening to his song. He had become very tame; would alight upon her shoulder and eat out of her hand. You who have almost every wish gratified do not know how precious such things become to the poor, especially the poor who have been well born. They do not have very many to love them, and the few that they have grow very dear. She sat down on the stairs outside her room, with the bird in her lap, a long time on that day when she took him away to be changed for money that they might buy food. It seemed almost wicked to sell him for that. He appeared happier than ever, and sang more sweetly than she had ever heard him sing before.

"I feel just as though I was Judas," she said to herself, wiping away the tears.

So long as she had been in the presence of the sick girl she had tried to be cheerful; she did not stop to take this farewell visit with her bird until she had reached the flight of steps leading down to the street, lest Jane might chance to hear them.

At last, however, she summoned all the courage which she could, and took him away, and came back feeling

very sad, as though the world was not exactly what it had been in the morning. I suppose mothers feel that way when they have left their little ones under the snow. She dreaded to enter again the room where she and Dickey had lived so happily together; it would seem so still now. When she reached the house, she sat down on the same stair again and had a cry all by herself. Then she wiped her eyes, and, trying to appear as though nothing had happened to cause her any grief, she came into the room. The sick girl was lying with her face turned toward the wall; she did not move when Katie entered, so the child thought she was asleep. She crossed the room on tiptoe, and sat down by the window; not in her rocking-chair: that was gone. There was nothing but the old chest left now. For some time she sat quietly waiting for Jane to awaken. Presently she heard her voice saying,—

"Katie."

In a moment she was by her side. The girl with effort turned over, and, having settled herself in her new position, continued in a low voice, speaking in only short sentences, and with evident pain,—

"Katie, I have some'n to tell you, but I don't want you to feel bad." The child with a sudden look of anxiety bent forward and kissed her.

"What is it, Jane?" she said. The girl continued:

"I ain't goin' to be with you very much longer, dear. I know I ain't done what I ought 'a done. I ought 'a set you a better example 'n I have; but I been tryin' to be worthy o' you for a good while, darlin'. I ain't told no whoppers like I used to tell; an' I been tryin' to pray. Only I was kind o' 'shamed to do it afore you, 'cause

you knowed how I used to be fetched up by the cops when I was a young 'n. It seemed queer for me to be turnin' pious. So I didn't say nothin' to you, but when you've been to school, an' since I been a lyin' here, I've prayed every day that God 'd make me more like you an' Mrs. Russell. An' I think He will, Katie. He knows I didn't have much bringin' up, an' it seems to me as though when I get through here, He's goin' to give me another chance, somehow."

The child could only lay her cheek close down to Jane's and sob, and beg her not to talk as though she were going to die. The next day was the Sabbath, and when the bells began to ring for church Peggy put on her old shawl and started out. She did not tell anybody where she was going, but when she came back she looked brighter than she had for several days, and sitting down by the side of the bed, she told the two girls that there would be a surprise for them that afternoon. She would not tell them what it was, and though she looked so happy they could not guess. There was no sound of the hammer in the next room, for Sandy always kept the Sabbath. He was too feeble to go to church very often, but he never neglected to read his Bible, and the morning prayer which he and Peggy offered every day was made a little longer than usual. Sometimes they read a sermon together, but much of the day was spent in singing. So while these three were in Jane's room, they heard his voice through the thin partition. He was reading to himself that portion of the Book of Revelation which says,—

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Then he closed the book, and bringing the palms of his hands together and shutting his eyes as though in holy ecstasy, he sang and they heard him,—

"Oh, the transporting, rapturous scene
That rises to my sight!
Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight!

"O'er all those wide-extended plains
Shines one eternal day;
There God the Son forever reigns,
And scatters night away."

In the afternoon, as Katie sat at the window listening to the steady breathing of Jane while she lay asleep, she saw a carriage approaching the house. The horses were pure white, and their prancing step and gracefully curved necks reminded her of the pictures she had seen in her illustrated history at school, of Napoleon riding with Josephine through the forest at Fontainebleau; only there was no attempt at display here. The equipage was costly, but it conveyed the impression of comfort rather than vanity. The owner evidently did not feel the need of using golden harness by which to advertise his riches.

There was no little powdered monkey of a boy on the back platform, kept ostensibly for the purpose of opening the carriage-door, but in reality for the purpose of mutely saying to the spectators, "The gorgeous individual within is an exceedingly rich individual; and she moves only in the circles of the upper ten, she does. Hats off!"

The child's heart throbbed when she saw the carriage approach, for she knew well to whom it belonged.

"Oh, Mrs. Russell's coming!" she exclaimed with joy, in an undertone, running to the bedside of Jane and awakening her gently. "Mrs. Russell's coming; her carriage is down-stairs now." This, then, was the surprise of which Peggy had spoken. She had often heard of Katie's beautiful teacher in the Sabbath-school, and had felt sorry for the child when her best clothes had been pawned, and she could no longer attend because she had nothing to wear. So when the bells rang that morning, she determined to see the lady and tell her all about it.

Peggy had been greatly delighted with the reception she had received from Mrs. Russell, who had inquired very earnestly about Katie, and had thanked her so cordially and with such a sweet smile for having brought her tidings of her absent pupil, that the first thing she did when she went home was to tear up a "Tract for the Times," which had been handed to her by a socialistic neighbor, and which spoke of all rich people as "The Grand Larcenists of America," and legitimate "Dynamite Victims."

For a moment Katie's countenance changed as she looked about on the bare walls and curtainless window.

It seemed out of place for such an one as Mrs. Russell to visit her in a room like that. She had not much time to think of these things, however, for while she was shaking up Jane's pillow and adjusting the cover-lid a rap was heard on the door, and she hastened to open it.

"Good-afternoon," said the sweet voice of the lady. "I've missed my little pupil for a good while. I wanted to come and see you, for I feared you might be sick, but you never gave me your address, you know." And, stooping down, she kissed her. Katie thought no more of the bare walls and uncarpeted floor. No sooner had her teacher entered than it seemed as though she had lived in just such a room all her life long. She laid down on the trunk a little bundle which she had brought with her, and taking the chair which Katie offered (one which Peggy had brought in that morning), she drew it up to the bedside of the sick girl.

"And this is the excuse for my little scholar staying away from her teacher all these weeks, is it?" she said. "Well, I have no doubt she makes a very faithful nurse." She knew the real reason, for Peggy had told her; but unlike some well-meaning philanthropists, she thought it would not help matters any to remind the child of her poverty.

If Jane had known in the morning that this wealthy woman was coming, she would have felt nervous all the day; but she was not at all nervous now. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for Mrs. Russell to be sitting there, stroking back her hair and talking thus with her. A quiet calm came over her, and she felt toward her as she never had toward any other woman.

She seemed so great and yet so good; and when, after talking with her in a low, sweet voice, she arose to go, promising to come on the morrow, Jane felt as though she could put her arms about her neck and bless her.

"Here are some garments, Katie," she said, pointing to the package. "I thought they might just fit you, and so I brought them. I did not know but our sick girl here"—and she smiled on Jane—"might like some little delicacies, too. So I put some in the carriage, and when I go down I will let the coachman bring them up. Good-by." And before they could thank her she had passed quietly out of the door and closed it.

Like the sailor lost at sea, saved when just despairing, Jane could scarcely realize that it was all true. Tears gushed from her eyes, but they were tears of joy; and she lay in quiet ecstasy, scarcely daring to move, lest she should awaken and find it all a dream.

So the next day the lady came; and after that almost every day. Little by little she drew from Jane and Peggy the story of the sick girl's life. Her sympathies warmed toward her more and more as she learned of her suffering and sorrow, and of the heroic spirit in which she had risen above it. She came to feel a deeper, more personal interest in Katie also, and began to try to devise some plan to help the child when Jane should be taken away. She had never had any children of her own, and she found herself wondering day by day whether God did not intend that she should take this little waif into her own heart and life. As with every true woman, the maternal instinct in Mrs. Russell was very strong; she longed to love, and to be loved by, a little child. Katie, with her unselfish devotion to Jane, and her sweet and

trustful purity, appealed to her deepest affection as none other ever had.

One day as she sat by the bedside of Jane, and Katie was out, the voice of Sandy could be heard in the next room, singing as usual, and Mrs. Russell said, "He seems to be a very happy old man."

"Yes, an' very good, I guess. He's been great company for me while I been lyin' here. Katie the other day was readin' in the Bible as how somebody was in a prison, an' at night he was a singin' all to himself,—but the others what was in the prison heard him sing, an' somehow—I forget now how—it made 'm better for it."

"Was it Paul and Silas?"

"Yes, them's the ones. An' when she read that I thought o' him,—an' I thought that good folks don't know how much good they do when they're happy like him,—it kind o' goes through the wall like, as it does here, an' catches somebody on the other side,—what they don't know nothin' about."

"Yes, the best way to make happy is to be happy."

"I know it; but I been kind o' unhappy, Mrs. Russell, when I've heard him sing them hymns; 'cause I been a real bad 'n in my day; an' I been a wonderin' whether they was for such as me." There was an intensely earnest look in her eyes as she gazed up into the face of her benefactress. The latter pressed tenderly the thin white hand which lay in hers while she answered,—

"'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' That's what Paul says, Jane; and if he was able to save the chief, surely he is

able to save the rank and file. If Paul did not despair, who had 'breathed out threatening and slaughter,' surely nobody need despair."

"But how is a body to go about it, Mrs. Russell?"

"Why, my poor girl, just tell Him your sin, just as you've told it to me; and then lay your weak hand in His, leaving all to His love as you would to mine. Only remember He is ten thousand times more ready to love you and take care of you than any human being ever can be. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.'"

"Is that exactly what it means to be a Christian?"

"Yes, just that and nothing more."

"Is that what the preacher means when he says that long lingo in his Sunday sermon?"

"Yes, that is just what he means."

"Just what he means? I wonder why he don't say so, then."

She lay quietly for a long time, and then she said in a low tone,—

"Mrs. Russell, I've put out my hand to Him, an' I think He's taken it. I know I been awful bad. I never told Katie that I was in the reform school, 'cause I couldn't bear for her to think that; though she knows I was took up by the cops. I didn't have much bringin' up; I learned to lie like a good 'n, an' I stole some when I was a young 'n. But if I feel sorry an' ask Him to forgive me, you don't think God 'll feel hard to me 'cause o' that, do you? I didn't know no better in them times."

And it seemed to Jane like the voice of an angel which

answered, "The Lord is very pitiful and of great mercy. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to a knowledge of the truth."

And the old man could be heard singing,—

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er:
I'm nearer my home to-day
Than ever I've been before.

"Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down;
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer wearing the crown."

After this she grew weaker as the days went by, but she was always happy. She had no anxiety about Katie now; for one morning Mrs. Russell had taken the child on her lap, and asked her if she could love her well enough to be her little girl when Jane had gone home to God. And Katie could not speak for joy, but she put her arms about the woman's neck and sobbed.

They did not hesitate to speak of Jane's dying after this; though they never called it death. It was only, as they phrased it, "going home." Every day they talked about it, and asked themselves a thousand questions about that better life. Should they know each other? And Mrs. Russell, with the Bible open at some promise, would answer yes; and Jane would smile and say,—

"I'll be lookin' out for you both until I see you comin' up to the gate; and then we won't never have to part no more, will we?"

At last the day came. It was a sunlit Sabbath in early spring, and they had been talking together of that

country where there should never be winter any more. She had seemed even brighter than usual in the morning, but as the afternoon passed on she grew much weaker, until at last she could not speak; and when they asked her if she knew them, she only smiled and pressed their hand. The roll of the Jordan could be heard now, and they felt they were in sight of the river. The deepening sun, looking in through the window where she had sat so often in those weary days of toil, caused the shadows to lengthen about them. Sandy had ceased his singing when they told him of it, but they asked him not to stop, for she had always loved to hear him sing. And now the tide was rippling at her very feet, but she did not fear. In the dim twilight they could see that her eyes were fixed upward, and a strange glory played upon her face, as of a light streaming through an open door. They spoke to her, but she did not notice them. She was done with earth and all its cruel wrong and suffering now. And amid the darkness and silence the old man's words were heard again,—

"Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

"Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close."

And they knew that prayer was answered. The weary was at rest.

## CHAPTER XII.

A SCENE OF GAY FESTIVITY AND WILD HILARITY, WHICH THE READER WILL DOUBTLESS RECOGNIZE AS BEING A LEAF OUT OF HIS OWN EXPERIENCE.

MRS. RUSSELL was a very sensible person; she did not feel that a mother's whole duty toward her child was done when she had properly clothed, fed, and spanked her. She had had occasionally little ones under her charge whom she had taken temporarily into her home, when the parents were sick; and in answer to their childish pleading for permission to do this or that she had made it a rule never to say "No" simply because it was easier than to give attention, and perhaps say "Yes." I have seen mothers in my time who did that; they "did not want to be bothered." But they were bothered; only the botheration came further on, when the hair was gray and the foot was feeble with age, and they were not so well able to bear it as they would have been years back, when nature asked them to. They refused to pay the debt of motherhood in instalments, day by day, until at last nature sent in her bill, principal and interest, and they were compelled to make it all in one payment; and it killed them. Poor broken hearts! They are under the sod now. There are no flowers planted above them; for the drunken son and the dissolute daughter never think of them now. They yearned to do it once; but the mother, with her multiplied engagements outside her home, did not want the "trouble." Alas, she had "trouble" enough later on!

But Mrs. Russell was a very sensible woman. She was so sensible that Katie could scarcely for a long time realize the wonderful change in her condition. She knew of course that there was no longer any fear of want, and it was very delightful to feel that every day after her return from school she could ride or drive if she chose. But in this new home of her adoption there was so little emphasis placed on these things, and so much emphasis on the practical responsibilities of life, that even strangers, stopping there for a few days, came almost immediately to feel at perfect ease; and when they left they found themselves thinking, not of the noble mansion, but of the noble people who dwelt in it. When they recalled their visits there they seldom spoke of the carpets, or the cut glass in the way of ornaments, and dishes, or the servants; it was always of the cosey fireside, and the pictures, and the genial kindly talk at the table.

In short, Mr. and Mrs. Russell owned their fortune, instead of their fortune owning them.

Thus the routine of Katie's daily life was changed as little as possible. She went to school every morning; the only difference being that on rainy days she rode instead of walking. When she appeared once more in her Sabbath-school class the change in her dress was scarcely marked, for Jane had provided her very pretty clothes in the days of her comparative prosperity. Of course she deeply mourned the loss of her friend. Every Saturday morning they drove out to the little green mound, bearing fresh flowers with them. Sometimes they would sit and talk for hours beside the grave; and always hopefully. It was on a hill-side where they had buried her; Mrs. Russell had chosen the spot because,

as she said, "it seemed so peaceful there." A dense hedge of evergreen surrounded the plat, and in one corner was a bed of flowers formed like an anchor, and in the other corner another like a star; while on either side the entrance there stood two great poplars, as sentinels keeping guard until the resurrection morn. The form of an angel cut out of marble bent above the spot; the wings were spread as though ready for flight, and one hand was pointing upward, while the other was stretched out with the palm turned down, as in the act of pronouncing peace. One fact which they could not understand greatly surprised them. Every week when they came they found that some one had been there before them, and with a bit of white ribbon had fastened to the outstretched hand a fresh wreath of flowers.

"It must be Peggy or Sandy," suggested Katie. But both of these denied all knowledge concerning the matter, and when they came to question the keeper he was as ignorant as they. Moreover, on the very day after the funeral the child had thought of her bird, and, having secured the necessary amount from Mrs. Russell, had hastened off to redeem it. And when she came home crying because on that very day it had been sold, she found it awaiting her in her new home. Dickey chirped and seemed as genuinely glad as a bird could; but his joy was as nothing when compared with hers. No one, however, could unravel the mystery; the only account the servants could give was that an old man had come and left it at the back door, and said it was for the child.

Thus, like a young tree which becomes easily rooted, she grew up amid her new surroundings until, without

any very apparent change, she became a part of them and they a part of her. The past grew to be more and more only a vague memory. The stereoscopic picture of the little home in Jenkinstown was fading from the canvas, and the facts of the present, with the possibilities of the future, were becoming more vivid and real.

One Sabbath, several weeks after her adoption into her new home, a church sociable was announced for the following Tuesday evening. Mrs. Russell, though frequently preferring the quiet of her own dwelling, always made it a point to be present.

"I do not go to get; I go to give," she would say to herself, when tempted to yield to a present inclination. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

So she and Katie were present on this Tuesday evening, and Mr. Russell promised to call round, after a meeting of the Common Council, of which he was a member. They did not arrive till late, but when they did, any one at all familiar with such gatherings, when held in "church parlors," would have recognized it immediately as a "social."

On entering the large room, they found almost all of those present seated in long rows of chairs, placed against the wall, conversing in whispers, if they conversed at all, and waiting uncomfortably for something to begin. Over in one corner a few of the boys and girls were snickering, but the great majority were sitting very straight, trying to look happy, and wishing themselves at home. Here and there in the row was some individual who had come out with social inclinations, but who, having become weary of sitting up straight and being

convivial all by himself, had found the solemn merry-making a little dull, and had accordingly dropped asleep.

"Oh, this will never do!" exclaimed Mrs. Russell to herself, as she looked around. Then walking up to some ladies whom she recognized as part of "the committee of entertainment," she said, "Let's get them to circulating. Strike up something on the piano and ask them to promenade."

"We're waiting for the singers," answered one of the ladies. "We have a fine programme, but the performers always seem to delay their arrival at a church social till the last minute. I don't see why it is; they are willing enough to go to a party."

Mrs. Russell looked at the rows of chairs arranged against the wall as if by the hand of an undertaker; at the walls of the "church parlor" unornamented with a single picture; at the entrance to the "parlor," where no one in particular appeared to feel the responsibility of attending to receive the guests, but where the stranger on his arrival was first greeted by the dumb stare of a number of uncomfortable young men (standing first on one leg and then on another, that they might perchance appear at ease), and then left to fix his eye upon some distant chair, and to travel toward it across the intervening desert, without receiving even an "all hail" from a single caravan on the way.

And she thought that she could see very readily why it was that people who were willing enough to go to a party should absent themselves from a church social.

I said the walls were unornamented with a single picture; and conscience will not permit me to change the adjective, notwithstanding the fact that there were in re-

ality two pictures there. One was a ghastly portrait of some scriptural character, thin and spectral, a copy of one of the old masters, who lived and painted in the days when religion was supposed to dwell only in the breasts of skinny people, when the priests despised "the flesh" so much that they were willing to burn up all their friends, and when a man did not dare to be fat for fear of becoming a roast heretic. The second was the portrait of an ex-pastor, taken at the age of seventy. He was a good man, and not at all vain; which, if he looked like his picture, was very fortunate for his peace of mind. Just before leaving his charge he had had this taken and presented to the church, as a farewell token of his love. After receiving it, some of the worldly-minded declared in a whisper that it was the only sin they had ever known him to commit. But they had accepted it, and hung it in place on the walls of the "parlor," and had drawn the mantle of charity over him, wishing meanwhile that they could do the same with his portrait.

Amid such hilarious surroundings the company had slowly and solemnly assembled, until now when Mrs. Russell looked at her watch it was half-past eight o'clock.

"We must do something," she said, decidedly, "even if the singers have not arrived. We mustn't let people sit here staring at one another like a lot of mummies. Do have some one play, and so, if possible, get them on their feet."

"I think we should try to cultivate intellectual recreation, for my part," said the wife of one of the deacons, with superior dignity. She was a woman whose great aim in life was to be thought intellectual. She would be shocked beyond measure if any one failed to use the

newest pronunciation of a word, and she herself would search through six dictionaries to find it; though it must be said that she knew far more about the pronunciation of a thing than of the thing itself. Of her clergyman, who had graduated from three universities, she had been heard to say that "his preaching was very good, but she often felt as though she should like to draw a line through some of his sentences." In short, she was a woman who wore glasses, pronounced either, ĭther, and doted on Robert Browning because she could not understand him. "I don't see the use of always ĭther getting folks on their feet as they do at parties, or else having something to eat. Nĭther do I think it is appropriate for a church social. Why can't they talk?"

"Because, people to talk must have fresh ideas, which the generality of people have not," responded Mrs. Russell. "They are used to walking and used to eating, and as soon as we can get folks to doing that which they are accustomed to do they feel at ease. Then we can reach them by conversation if we choose, but not before."

The deacon's wife turned and walked away; she was indignant at Mrs. Russell, for she herself was on the social committee, and the words spoken were an arrow smiting her self-esteem. So, like a great many people when they cannot answer an argument, she retired on her dignity, nursing her wrath. She did not remain long at the social, but soon went home to hunt up the newest pronunciation of idyl.

It was now announced that every one would be expected to select a partner and promenade, and efforts were immediately instituted to procure a player. One young lady had practised thirteen years, but, shaking

her head determinedly, she affirmed that she could never in the world play without her notes. Another who always made it a principle never to perform until she had been pressed to do so at least three times, was only asked twice; so she sat and sulked all the rest of the evening, for she had been practising two hours that afternoon on one piece, fully expecting to be unexpectedly called upon.

Finally a player was secured, and after considerable exhortation by the pastor, together with individual solicitation, enough people were found to select partners and walk around really to make it appear, by about nine o'clock, as though something had begun. One young man, who had sat for an hour rubbing his middle finger along his knee, up and down the seam of his pantaloons, suddenly determined that he would be jovial. The cause of his inspiration was a fresh draught of courage which he had imbibed by seeing the smile (in which he had been indulging for the general benefit of the public at large) responded to unexpectedly by a young woman whom he knew, and who sat against the opposite wall. Leaping from his seat, he started across the room and asked her to take a walk. So they joined the procession, but he finding nothing to say, and the young lady being equally loquacious, he soon began to experience a sense of awkwardness once more, and accordingly pursued his promenade with the same grim solemnity with which the man who has not learned to dance until late in life passes through the figures of a quadrille.

At length the singers arrived, and then the supper was served, so that when the hour came for them to go home every one felt that they were just beginning to enjoy the evening. It was at this sociable that Katie saw for the

first time Mrs. Colonel Squealum DeCamp. With the exception of a few additional wrinkles, the five or six years which had passed had left her unchanged in appearance since we saw her in the New York hotel, mistaking Hans Volgate for a rag-bag. She and her husband had just returned from Europe. As before hinted, their matrimony had been a matter of money, and their marriage, therefore, a mirage. Of course the same results had followed which nearly always follow: "Dear George" had become sarcastic, frequently leaving her dissolved in tears; while she had become embittered because she was not understood. Though respectful to one another in society, their private life was somewhat in accordance with the legend of the Kilkenny cats. Here, for example, is a specimen of their affectionate conversation on the afternoon of that same day:

"You are going to the sociable at the church to-night, of course," she said, as they sat together at the tea-table.

"No, I'm not," he answered, calmly; "I'm going to the club to see if I can hear anything more about the threatened strike."

Then they quarrelled, he remaining cool and she becoming excited.

"Very well," she exclaimed at length, with heated face. "I shall drive there in the carriage; you are welcome to go where you like. Your room is better than your company, any way."

"Well," he replied, deliberately, taking out his gold toothpick, "I confess that my present company is not quite as agreeable as she might be."

"You call me your company?"

"You are my present company, are you not?"

"Agreeable! How can you expect me to be agreeable? I would like to know what kind of company you would have me be?"

"If I had my choice," pointing toward the door, "in the language of the players, I would have you be a travelling company."

"Ugh! I hate you!"

"Ah, I thought you loved me," biting off the end of a cigar.

"I'd like to know how you ever came to make such a mistake as that?"

"I reasoned, my love, by analogy. Like the man who loves tobacco, I thought you loved me because you seemed to be so ready to chew me up. Good-by, Dovey." And he walked out.

When he had gone she indulged in some liquid emotion, but suddenly remembering that she was to make an appearance at the sociable, and that crying might spoil her complexion, she took out her handkerchief and gave to her sorrow a farewell salute; then she went up to arrange her hair.

She did not arrive at her destination until late, so that the gay festivities were well under way when she swept into the "parlor." The promenaders had finished their walk-around, and the young men with their hands on their knees, having seated themselves by the side of their partners, were once more actively engaged in rubbing the seam of their pantaloons.

It was a settled principle with her always to arrive late at such gatherings. "It is so much better to be stared at by a roomful of people than to have to stare,"

she was accustomed to say. In entertaining such a sentiment she evinced her superior sagacity, and set an example to all my lady readers, church attendants, party-goers, and others, to whom it will doubtless come as a brand-new suggestion.

Upon entering the "parlor," after having removed her things, she walked up to one of the mad revellers, who sat in a chair as though she was having her picture taken, and sweeping toward her like a gust of wind, she cried,—

"Oh, you dear woman! How delighted I am to see you looking so well! Why, I think I never saw you with such a becoming dress on in all my life. You really are getting quite young."

The "dear woman" answered, "Yes? You had a pleasant trip to Europe, I hope?"

"Oh, perfectly charming! Did you stop at the Hôtel du Louvre in Paris when you were over? Isn't it magnificent? Why, we had six courses for dinner one Sunday afternoon, and sat at the table two hours. Paris is a wonderful city, isn't it? Just think of it, two hours for dinner!"

"I suppose you visited the gallery of the Louvre?"

"Oh, yes, we went over one morning. Isn't it lovely? Would you believe it, the fashions in Paris now are just too ridiculous for anything. Ladies are wearing those little tight dresses bound close about the hips, with a very large bustle behind. Isn't it absurd? I suppose we shall have it among us very soon."

"Yes, very absurd. What did you think of the pictures in the *Salon Carré?* That contains the most beautiful gems in the whole collection, you know."

"Oh, they were just charming, only they made my head ache. But what a lovely avenue the Champs Elysées is! Isn't it gorgeous? And the carriages! We were just there in the season, and it was worth a trip across the ocean if only to see those beautiful equipages. And the bonnets those French women had on! They were just too beautiful for anything. There is one thing, as I remarked to Mr. DeCamp a thousand times, that I admire about the French nation. They do know how to dress in style. I never saw such finely-formed women in all my born days. Why, even the shop-girls looked just as though they had come out of a bandbox."

"I suppose you visited Brussels?"

"Yes, we were there a week."

"What did you think of the battle-field of Waterloo?"

"Well, to tell the truth, we didn't have time to go to the field of Waterloo. Some of our party went, but you know Brussels is the great place where laces are made, and we were kept so busy driving from one store to another looking at those lovely laces, that when we got through I was just too tired to go anywhere except to bed. But we were delighted with Brussels. It must be a very gay city in the season."

"Was the Palace of Justice complete when you were there? Of course you saw it?"

"Yes, we saw it; at least I think we did. At any rate, we drove around a good deal and saw something; I think they said it was the Palace of Justice, or a picture-gallery, or something. I was glad to get home, though. This sight-seeing! I think it is very instructive, but it's awfully tiresome. One has to pay such close attention."

"Yes, it is instructive," replied the lady, dryly, subsiding into silence. She had in former years been a governess, and having ultimately married the father of the children under her charge, had shown herself a faithful mother to them as well as a true wife to him; and while not very much at home in society (not being given very much to giggling), the pastor looked upon her as one of his most appreciative hearers.

Mrs. DeCamp, with a glow of satisfaction, felt that she had made an impression, and went off to repeat the operation elsewhere. She was soon seen in another part of the room, surrounded by a bevy of ladies, and as she touched now her shoulders and then her hips, it was evident that she was once more revelling in the midst of Brussels lace and Parisian dresses. Presently one of the ladies clasped her hands and rolled up her eyes in astonishment, and the ex-governess, seeing them from afar, concluded that they had just sat down to the dinner with the six courses.

During all this time Katie had been sitting silently, rejoicing in what was to her a wondrous gathering. She had never before attended a party of any kind, and though she felt a little ill at ease, she enjoyed it intensely, for it was to her the revelation of a new life. Mrs. Russell did not think it wise to introduce her widely at first; she felt, with the keen instinct of a refined woman, that the timid child would prefer being left to herself, with the exception of the few acquaintances she had made in the class at her school. It had become generally known, however, that she was Mrs. Russell's adopted daughter. Quite a number of ladies had introduced themselves, and each had been charmed with her modest ways and beautiful

face. Mrs. DeCamp, having so recently returned to the city, had not learned of this addition to her friend's family.

"Who is that pretty young girl?" she asked, stopping short just at the fifth course and looking over at Katie.

"Why, that is Mrs. Russell's newly-adopted daughter. Haven't you heard of it?"

Mrs. DeCamp threw up her hands, and, forgetting all about the ten kinds of dessert, exclaimed, "No, really?"

They assured her that it was really.

"Why, she'll be an heiress. She's their only child. Think of the amount of money that young girl will some day have in her own name!"

Excusing herself, she hastened over to where Katie sat and entered into a lengthy conversation. Before she had finished, she had told her of her instructive trip to Europe, of the laces and the dresses tight around the hips, and the dinners with the many courses. Then she concluded by advising her to go across some time herself, and left the child wondering what manner of woman this was.

"I must introduce her to Waldemar," she said to herself, buzzing across the room in search of that young man.

Who was Waldemar? Do you remember that curly-headed little chap whom we met in the second chapter? The black-haired boy in the crib whom Hans mistook for the lost Katie? That was Waldemar, nephew to Mrs. Colonel Squealum DeCamp. This world is not such a big world, after all. It is very little, and we cross each other's track many times.

"Waldemar," she said, with certain mysterious looks, "come this way. I want to introduce you to the adopted daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Russell."

"Match-making again," he thought to himself, as he submitted to her request, and with a half-smile followed her to the place where Katie sat.

He was a boy of only fifteen years of age, but for one so young was a shrewd observer, and had not only noticed the peculiarities of his aunt for himself, but had heard them discussed quietly at the family table in his own home. With a very keen sense of the ridiculous, and therefore always ready to perceive the humorous side of everything which happened, he was withal very tender-hearted and kind; so that while he might make these observations to himself, he usually kept them to himself. He was a handsome boy, with brown eyes and high forehead, and wavy locks; one of those who appear from very boyhood to fulfil that description of a gentleman,—a definition which has never been excelled,—

"As gentle as a woman, and as manly as a man."

No one could remember having seen him embarrassed; he was at perfect ease in society, though he preferred, whenever he could get it, the company of boys. Girls he looked upon as well-meaning nonentities, who were put into the world for the purpose of dressing up. Not that he had ever come definitely to such an opinion, but having had the weaknesses of his aunt so prominently before him, he had, without intending to, drifted into a false opinion of the sex. Of course he looked upon his mother as an exception; where is the boy who doesn't? But to him a girl was like an aroma,—agreeable, perhaps, but unsubstantial.

He was never so well pleased as when with a company

of boys, hunting or fishing, or playing ball. His very faults were the result of his exuberant spirits and love of jollity. He seemed, in short, to look upon life as a huge joke. Intensely enthusiastic, whatever he undertook he performed with that zest which can turn the toughest drudgery into fun. In his recitations he stood either at the top of his class or at foot; never in the middle. He disliked mathematics, and stood at the foot; but he delighted in language, and history and literature, and stood at the head. His father was accustomed to say of him sometimes with hopefulness and sometimes with chagrin, that "that boy would turn out to be either extraordinary or extraordinary ordinary." And he was right. His boy was sometimes the teacher's despair, especially if the teacher chanced to be one of those instructors who look upon pupils as so many sticks of wood, who are all to undergo the same process, and whose worth or worthlessness is to be judged by the facility with which they conform to the pattern, after having been put through the machine. But when she was of that wiser kind who look upon their scholars not as blocks, but as living souls, each with his peculiar tendencies and possibilities, he became the object of enthusiastic hope.

Having introduced them one to another, Mrs. DeCamp fluttered across the room, cheerful and well pleased as if she had been some clergyman's assistant drumming up a job in a dull season. "Nobody can tell; and who knows?" she chuckled to herself as she viewed them from a distance.

Rather young? Why, bless you, reader, there are people in this world, and many of them, who if they

had been present at creation would have ordained that the very birds should have been hatched out in pairs, and (save for the pleasure of making the matches) they would have had human marriages like poets, "not made, but born." Intrigue is to some women a necessity, and if they found no other field for the display of their talents, they would begin among the cradles. To people of Mrs. DeCamp's range the first question in the catechism is, "What is the chief end of woman?" and the answer, "At all hazards, to keep from being an old maid."

If Waldemar had chanced to be introduced to Katie casually, and under circumstances where she would have felt at ease, he perhaps might have been impressed with the fact that she was a good, sensible girl for one of her age, and with that impression would have gone his way, and forgotten the existence of such an individual, as he was bound to do any way. He knew, however, that he was being watched from the other side of the room, and while it did not at all disconcert him, he nevertheless felt that he wished to conclude the interview as soon as possible. So the only impression which he carried away was that she was a timid, pretty girl, who did not know very much, or, if she did, did not know how to say it; and who, like the rest of womankind, had been created for the purpose of helping the milliners to get a living. Excusing himself as soon as he could, he joined his companions, and was soon deeply engaged in discussing the relative merits of the Scrawnee Base Ball Club and the High School nine.

Having thus placed Katie on her shop shelf, among the other beautiful young women whom she kept con-

stantly on hand for the matrimonial market, Mrs. DeCamp determined to learn all she could concerning the value of this new piece of goods.

"She is young now, of course," she thought to herself, as she went bustling across the room to where Mrs. Russell sat, "but she is getting older all the time, and it won't do any harm for Waldemar to have the first chance. There 'll be plenty of suitors four or five years from now."

Her pace slackened somewhat as she drew near the lady; it was not quite so breezy as when she approached the ex-governess. She felt in some way that she scarcely understood Mrs. Russell. She pronounced her "prim," and never was really comfortable in her company. The real fact was, though she would not have admitted it, even to herself, that she knew in her heart that Mrs. Russell saw straight through her, with all her little motives and her hollow vanities.

"What a perfectly lovely child that is you have adopted!" she exclaimed, after the customary greetings. "Where did you find her? She looks really like a little princess in that beautiful skirt."

"Yes, she is a sweet child," replied the other, evidently annoyed that Mrs. DeCamp had spoken so loud as to let Katie hear what was said of her.

"She really looks as though she might be the centre of quite a romance. Has she a history?"

"I suppose we all have a history," evasively.

Then the conversation was interrupted, and from that hour Mrs. DeCamp resolved to find what that history was.

They formed a singular contrast, these two. If judg-

ment were being passed upon their looks, probably eleven people out of a dozen woul have decided in favor of Mrs. DeCamp. She certainly would have attracted the attention of twenty-four ere the twenty-fifth (probably some paternal old man) had finished studying the face of her companion.

What is beauty? The disciples saw it in our Lord, but it consisted so little in external symmetry that those disciples have not even thought to tell us the color of his hair or of his eyes, the measure of his stature, or the shape of his hand or foot. Such was the beauty of Mrs. Russell. A painter could not have painted it; probably would not have cared to. Hers was a grace which needed rather a biographer. There was comparatively little regularity of feature when one came to analysis, but, like Moses when he descended from the mountain-top, her "face shone and she knew it not." Whatever of beauty there was in the face of Mrs. DeCamp, with the complexion powdered and the wrinkles painted over, was that which a picture could represent, the poorest kind.

At last Mr. Russell arrived, and Mrs. DeCamp was surprised to find her husband accompanying him.

"Why, George, I thought you were not coming," she said.

"My dear, you know I could not get along for a whole evening without you."

"Oh, how good of you!" loud enough for the company to hear. "I had quite despaired of seeing you."

The truth was that this goodness had been quite involuntary. Mr. DeCamp, in addition to his business in the bank, was the proprietor of a woollen-factory, and

there had recently appeared signs of considerable dissatisfaction among his employés. He was afraid of a strike, and, as he had large contracts on his hands, it occasioned him a great deal of anxiety. Mr. Russell, though he was the president of a large rolling-mill company employing several thousand hands, had never had but one strike in all his business career. If he had endeavored to enforce his will by measures such as were used by firms about him, he would doubtless have had the same trouble which they had. But he did not. No workingman was ever repulsed who had a grievance. He was kindly received, and his requests carefully considered.

Of course he did not pretend to give his personal attention to each of these cases; but it was understood throughout the whole establishment that the heads of the different departments were to seek to exercise not merely justice, but kindness. Cases which could not be settled by those lower in authority were referred to the firm, and by them duly considered. The skilled workmen were not simply paid in wages, but received, in addition, a certain percentage of the profits. The whole policy was one of generosity and encouragement to greater effort. The promotions were made from among the men, and the firm would not go outside their own employés to secure one to fill an important position simply because they might obtain him at less expense. He had, moreover, arranged a reading-room for the men, where coffee could be had at cost, and provided it with chess and checkers. Once a week he made it a point to be there himself in the evening; and many a friendly game did he have with some calloused-handed puddler, enjoy-

ing it as heartily as they whenever they succeeded in beating him.

There was not a man of them who would not have staked his life on Mr. Russell's honor. Their homes were pleasant and happy; for he gave a prize at the end of each year to the owner of that flower-garden which should be declared by a committee selected by themselves the most worthy to receive it.

Mr. DeCamp's manner of dealing with his employés was very different from this. His horizon seemed to be dark and tempestuous; and he had sought his friend to consult with him concerning his troubles. Thus it happened that they were now found together at the sociable, where Mr. Russell had appointed to meet his wife.

"At stated intervals," this gentleman said, when he and Mr. DeCamp had seated themselves together in one corner of the room, "our men are invited to meet their employers. Then we hold a meeting, at which speeches are delivered going to show the beneficial results of frugality and morality. After the speeches a public statement is made concerning the profits to be divided."

"But your plan is revolutionary."

"Not at all. There are more than a hundred firms in Europe who are doing this same thing."

"But what does it all amount to? Even if you give them more money, they will only spend it in drink."

"That is the one point in which we are severe with our employés. It is distinctly understood that every man employed by us shall be a temperance man. Not that we attempt to be dictatorial; we do not attempt to rob the German of his beer, or even the Irishman of

his whiskey if he wants it. But we turn our whole moral influence in favor of total abstinence; and in asking them to join us, we depend upon example as well as precept. Any man who gets drunk, for the first offence is reprimanded; for the second he is laid off for a week, and for the third he is discharged."

"What do they do on Sundays? Don't they get drunk then?"

"No, and for two reasons. First, we do not pay our men till Monday; in this way we remove the temptation. Secondly, we do no work after one o'clock Saturday. This gives the men a chance for a little outing with their families, instead of turning into a holiday the Sabbath, which I believe, on physiological principles as well as religious, ought to be kept as a holy day."

"What! do you never keep them at work on Sunday under pressure of business?"

"Never."

"Well, you are too strict. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

"I know the Sabbath was made for man; and that is the very reason why I for one will not rob him of it. It is his: I have no right to take it from him, even if he does happen to be poor and in my power."

"Well, what do they do with this money?"

"With part of it they build homes. We have a building association among our men which we encourage. My theory is that a good workman will be more likely to come from a good home and a bad workman from a bad home. So we encourage home building in every way that we can."

"My experience with the working class is, that the

more you give them the more they want. I haven't any patience with them."

"Then it isn't strange that the more you give them the more they want, for they know when you give it to them that you do it because you must; that you haven't any patience with them. Put yourself in their place; how would it be with you? Suppose you had been one of those Jocking Valley miners, willing to work for anything like decent wages, and by the merciless hand of a tyrannical corporation screwed down to the last farthing on which soul and body of your wife and child could be sustained; with no prospect of the possibility of laying by anything for old age,—nothing before you and those you love but the poor-house or a pauper's grave; would you not be driven to the doing of deeds for which in your calmer moments you would be sorry?"

"But are employers to be expected to give more than they can afford to give?"

"Afford to give! The fact is that many employers are not willing to make a fair division of their profits. They want to become rich in five years, and how can they do that except by oppression? There is the sworn statement of Mr. Rochester, who in that same Jocking Valley kept on employing his men at the old price,—there is his sworn statement that he made a profit of twenty per cent. right along, at the very time that this corporation was declaring they could not afford to give any more than starvation wages. It is this which gives power to the socialistic agitator and the blatant communistic tramp when they go among these people. I believe the workingmen of this country care neither for them nor their revolutionary principles; but they are in

many places in despair. There is, I believe, but one way to stop this rising tide of evil; and that is for the employers throughout our land to realize their real relation as guardians of those under engagement to them."

"Well, if I were a workingman and had any sense I think I should be satisfied. Why, there never was a time in the history of the world when that class fared so well as they do to-day. Look at the houses in which they live, or in which they might live if they would only save their wages instead of spending them for drink, and compare them with the cabins and shanties of their grandfathers. Why, with all these modern improvements, window-glass, sewing-machines, etc., a workingman now lives as dukes and earls in old England never thought of living only a few centuries ago."

"And I grant freely that there's truth in that. In some localities that is so; the whole of society has moved forward, and I do not believe as a rule that 'the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer'; all are moving forward, though the express goes faster than the freight. But the fact remains that you can never depend upon any mere mechanical improvements to bind these classes together. It isn't art this world needs, but heart. They know whether you look upon them as men or things. And as to their drinking, I believe the employers in our factories and mills are often a thousand times more responsible than they dream."

"How?"

"Men will congregate somewhere; they are made so. They are gregarious by nature. I seek to meet that emergency by establishing coffee-houses in the district where my works lie, where all of my employés can get

milk or coffee, or cocoa or tea, with a light lunch if they choose, at cost price. At ten o'clock these places are closed, and as a rule the men go home."

"Why, you ought to be a preacher," said Mr. DeCamp, laughing.

"Well, if I were a preacher," replied he, with a smile, "I'd preach these things right out, and if you were in my congregation I'd take for my text, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' and I warrant you there'd be the play of brimstone all around the church walls before I had finished. This is the great question of to-morrow, and the sooner we come to understand that fact and lay aside class prejudice, and place ourselves as Christian men in a position to look at the matter fairly, the better."

It was now quite late, and the people had mostly left. Mr. DeCamp's carriage was announced, and he bade his friend good-night.

"We have had a very important meeting of the Council," said Mr. Russell, turning toward his wife after the other had gone. "I still have a member to see who could not be present this evening. He lives at a considerable distance, so that I thought I would drive here first and take you home; I can see him afterwards." They had by this time reached the carriage.

"Perhaps we will accompany you if you think best. What a charming moonlight night it is!"

"Very well. The second door beyond the cemetery, John."

Gradually the houses became fewer in number and the road more solitary. The summer evening air made the drive very delightful, and from the open carriage they could discern all the objects along the way in the

clear moonlight. As they returned they noticed by the roadside an old man seated on a stone, and holding in his lap a dog. They rolled past him, and he sat watching them till they had gone.

Then he arose, and the keeper that night saw him walking up the carriage-way in the cemetery between the cedars with the dog at his side. He followed him, and when he came to the lot where Jane lay sleeping, he went in and lay down with his head resting on her grave.

"Poor fellow!" muttered the keeper, and turned away.

It was Michael Barney.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### AT LAST.

THERE had been many dark hours in Mike's life, but it seemed to him that the darkest hour he had ever known was that in which he had staggered away from the hotel in Belleville after his last terrible disappointment. To have in his very hand the fruit, and find it turn to ashes in his grasp! For one brief moment he had been like Lazarus raised from the dead, groping his way into the light; but when he sought for the hand which should remove the napkin from his eyes, it only smote him in the face and told him to go back into his grave again.

"Och, if I only knew she was dead intirely!" he groaned, as he fell into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

Seeing his earnestness, the young woman tried to recollect from whom she had heard the news of Jane's illness. At last she was able to direct him to Betsy Gamin, to whom, it will be remembered, Jane wrote on the morning of her departure, and with whom she had had correspondence at very rare intervals since that time. Betsy could say nothing, however, which could furnish Mike with any clue, except that the girl was somewhere in Groveland, and a few months before had written asking in reference to Mrs. Felix, and stating incidentally that she herself had been sick, but was somewhat better. Even her address in the city she could not tell; for Jane, not knowing exactly how the drubbing she had given to the woman had resulted, had taken the precaution in writing even to Betsy to have her send her reply to the general post-office. Seeing the grief of Mike, the girl promised that if she ever heard anything more concerning her friend she would write immediately to him, in care of Hans Volgate at Jenkinstown.

It was with a very heavy heart that Mike returned to his friend after searching Groveland for any stray hints of her whereabouts. He had advertised in the city papers, but Jane, rising early in the morning and sitting late at night over her sewing, had never any time to read the papers. Of course, therefore, he received no reply. Even the talk with Betsy Gamin served to fill him with apprehension lest the two wanderers had quitted the city; for she stated that the last letter which she had sent had been returned to her unopened, and consequently undelivered. Acquainted as we are with the facts of Jane's illness, we can tell why it had never been called for; but they, knowing nothing of this, naturally conjectured the

worst. Thus the weeks went by, and it would have been difficult to tell which was plunged into the deepest despondency, Hans or Mike.

But one day a letter arrived from Betsy, stating that Jane had written by the hand of another that she was very sick and soon to die, and had requested her to say to Mrs. Felix, if she still knew where she lived, that she felt no longer any bitterness toward her; that before she died she wished to forgive and ask forgiveness in return for whatever she might have done which was wrong. In this letter she had given her true address.

"At last, O God!" Mike exclaimed, as he clutched the note, and reread it with moist eyes and trembling hand. "At last, at last, O God!"

When would the train start? Not till next morning. He could not wait. He would not wait. He had been disappointed so many times, he would start at once. He became more excited as the hours passed. Hans began to look troubled. He had seen him greatly aroused, but never so unreasonable before. Hour after hour he walked the floor or went out wandering through the street. The good German followed close beside him, never leaving him for an instant. After a time he began to speak incoherently: then Hans knew the madness was upon him. The terrible strain for the last few weeks, followed, when almost all expectation was gone, by the sudden awakening of hope, had proved too much for his troubled mind.

For weeks he lay bound in the mad-house. Hans could not perform the errand himself, for when the letter had arrived he was at the store, and when he returned an hour or two later, Mike, in the mad excitement of joy, had crumpled and torn it, so that the writing was no

longer decipherable. With that strange cunning which is so common among the insane, he resisted all their efforts to extract from him the address.

When finally, after long confinement, he came to himself, it was all vivid to his memory. Every jot and tittle in that letter he could recall. With as little delay as possible he hastened on once more to Groveland. The door of the house which he sought was open, but he knocked.

"Does a young woman by the name of Jane live here?"

"She did live here, but she doesn't any more, poor thing. She was buried yesterday."

"Is there a child by the name o' Katie here?"

"No, not now. She's gone away, too. I heard tell some rich lady adopted her. If you'll step in, I'll find out all about it. The folks up-stairs knows all about 'em."

She did not ask him to follow, but he followed. The woman led him into the room where Peggy and Sandy were sitting together; Sandy at work and Peggy reading aloud to him.

As best he could, Mike controlled his emotion while he listened to the recital of the story with which the reader is already familiar. It was well, since he desired to hide his identity, that these two were very simple-hearted and unsuspecting persons.

"An' where does this Mrs. Russell live?" he asked, when they had concluded the story.

"I dunno, I'm sure, where she does live, but the Lord bless her wherever she is," replied Peggy.

"Is there any way that I can find out? Who was the preacher at the funeral?"

They told him that it was the pastor of the neighboring church. So he went forth, and that night he sat for three hours opposite the Russell mansion, till one after another the lights in the windows had gone out and all was dark.

Only God, looking down from the sky, saw the bitter struggle through which he passed during those hours. Should he claim her as his own child after having vainly sought her for all these years, or should he leave her in that exalted position where he now found her and go his way?

"Sure it's moine she is intirely, an' I ought to have her," he murmured. "They've got enough in that big mansion, widout takin' my one little bird out o' my bosom. Och, but what am I, to be talkin' o' takin' a young lady o' the loikes o' her? She's the daughter of a big person now; she'll be havin' gold an' silver, an' everything that heart can wish, an' what would I be doin' to take her away to live in a cabin loike mine, only for the sake of a poor unedjercated Irishman o' the loikes o' me!"

He sat in silence for a long time, watching the lights in the windows, and then with a sigh continued,—

"Och, me darlin', I been chasin' ye all over the world, so I have, wid a heavy heart, an' at last I've found ye, God be praised; an' there's nothin' but a stone wall between us. But sure you're farther away from me than ever ye was before, so ye are." Then after another pause: "You're farther away from me, because you're higher up; an' it's not *Michael Barney that'll drag ye down.* You're safe now, God be thanked for that. You're neither hungry nor cowld nor cryin' wid cruelty. You're where

you'll be happy now, bless your schwate heart! An' ye'll grow up to be a lady. Sure it's lonely I'll be widout ye, an' it's breakin' me heart to be thinkin' that I can niver put me arms about ye, an' call ye my own little choild any more; but I have suffered so long, an' for your sake, I'll suffer to the end,—I'll suffer to the end."

Then he went away with a great peace in his heart which he had not known for many weary years, and, having sought his room at the hotel, remained for a long time upon his knees. When he arose, he lay down with a smile to sleep, and he slept as peacefully as a little child. Those three hours of his lonely watch had been the triumph of a soul; the victory of love. Like others before him, he had gone down into Gethsemane, and sweat great drops of blood in giving himself a ransom for another; and now angels came and ministered unto him.

The next day he arose early and sought out the pawnbroker's shop which Peggy had incidentally described to him, and, having purchased the bird, took it as his first love-offering to his child. That afternoon he found his way to the grave of Jane, and his hand it was which henceforth kept the mound covered with flowers.

He soon learned at what hours the child went to her school, and, unobserved by her, would watch for her coming, and then follow at a distance filled with a quiet rapture. Once he spoke to her, asking her some simple question concerning the route as though he had lost his way; but he did not dare approach her again for a long time, because he came so near declaring himself her father and throwing his arms about her.

The room which she and Jane had occupied he secured

for himself, and, buying back again the furniture which had been pawned, endeavored, with the help of the casual descriptions of unsuspecting Peggy, to make it appear as nearly as he could just as it had appeared when they were living in it.

At first he was very shy of his new neighbors, lest they might guess that he was in some manner connected with the child, but gradually he became more trustful as their acquaintance increased and he found how simple-hearted these two were; so that he would sit for a long time in the evening after the day's work was done listening to the stories which they were never weary of telling about Jane and Katie, and the wonders of the new life into which the child had been introduced. Sometimes he would chance to meet her, for she was not forgetful of her trusty old friends, and very often would visit them and repay them manyfold for their kindness to her in the hour of her need. Such occasions were seldom, however, for when she came he was generally absent at his work, but Peggy would always have many interesting things to tell him when he returned. He had found employment as a porter in a store, but after he had been there for some weeks the firm dissolved, and because he had proved himself so faithful, the senior partner found him another situation as night watchman in a bank.

So after this he was no longer busy during the day, and thus he saw the child more frequently. Gradually they became so well acquainted that she would ask for him when she came to see Peggy and the old man. The latter had gotten completely over his diffidence by this time, and many a happy hour did they spend together, singing the old hymns with one another. The breath of society

was reeking with dangerous fumes, but it did not reach them. Gangs of men on the street corners were whispering such ominous words as "riot" and "blood;" but they knew nothing of these things.

Sandy's rooms were much more comfortable now, and he did not have to work as hard as he once did. Mrs. Russell had had the walls neatly papered and the woodwork painted, and though she could not persuade them to part with their old furniture, nevertheless when they went to bed at night they now slept on a spring mattress instead of the husks which had once caused their aged bones to ache. Katie had selected some pictures also, which Mike had hung tastefully around the walls for them; and the socialistic neighbor had long ago become disheartened in his efforts to disseminate his views and distribute his tracts in that quarter.

"None o' your papers for me," Peggy would say, when he pressed them upon her with harrowing stories of the wrongs of labor. "That there's bad people among the rich I don't doubt, just as there is among the poor. But it ain't riches or poverty that makes 'em bad; it's the kind o' heart they've got inside of 'em."

Living in the same house there was one family who readily became converts to the new doctrine that "all property is robbery," and that "capitalists are the pirates of the nineteenth century." Their name was Maguire, and both father and son were employed by Mr. DeCamp. That financier was accustomed, as we have seen already, to say that this whole question between the poor and the rich was only a matter of supply and demand.

"I pay my men just what I agree to pay them," he declared, with the virtuous pride of a good citizen, "and

I agree to pay them just as little as I can. That's business." He did not say, When I have paid them their stipend my full duty towards them is finished. But he thought so, and acted according to his creed. His employés grew to hate him, because they rightly felt that he looked upon them simply as machines, counting their labor exactly as he would reckon the value of a steam shovel: according to the work he could get out of it, and beyond that—nothing.

A few in his employ attended the same church; and from their distant pews they saw him bow graciously to others about him, but, though he met them every day, there was never a smile for them.

Some of them came to their work heavy-hearted after a week's absence. He never inquired the cause of that absence, except to deduct their wages without question, and threaten them in stern tones with summary discharge if it were repeated. And they never thought to tell him that the little child was sick and dying at home, and the wife was ill with watching, and that they had stayed away to wait for its last breathing. It is natural for us to whisper our sorrows into another's heart, but not to an iceberg. When Mr. Russell's partner died, and the men in the shops, who had loved him as they loved Mr. Russell himself, found themselves so completely overcome that they could not work while he was lying dead and unburied, that gentleman paid them in full for the three days in which they had sat in the silence and gloom of their own hearths, though it cost him thirty thousand dollars to do it. DeCamp, however, declared that while he was a good man he was not a wise one. He would not believe it when some one said that when Mr. Russell

had acted thus towards his men he had shown himself both good and wise too.

So every Saturday night DeCamp paid his hands, and went to church Sunday morning feeling that he had fulfilled all the duties of an employer toward his employés. And they hated him every day, and formed socialistic clubs, and made speeches at their gatherings, and heard speeches from others like themselves. And wicked words were used in an undertone, and sometimes when they were together and the doors were shut, in a louder tone, which might have prevented the employer from dozing as peacefully over the sermon if he could have heard it in his cushioned pew; threats in which occurred such ugly terms as robbery, and slavery, and revenge. And the daily journals denounced their meetings without discrimination; and books were written describing them as lazy thieves, caricaturing their assemblies, as though their wrongs were all within themselves, and their only thought was idleness and plunder. But few lifted their voices against the selfish heartlessness of the men who drove them to these things. Few seemed to discover that the increasing agitation was anything more than a question of mere wages and work; that what the laborer hungered for, though he in many instances knew it not, was not simply more gain, but more sympathy and respect: to be dealt with not as a machine, but as a man: to be permitted to feel that, though one worked at his bench and the other at his desk, all sympathy between them was not closed when the shop was shut.

True, there were husky ejaculations raised in behalf of the laborer, and tracts were written and were distributed while the men at the hour of lunch talked together with

angry glances. But these were mostly so ultra and untrue as to command no respect, and only to prejudice the cause they pretended to espouse: the work of destructionists and not of constructionists. Society heard the mad ravings of the fever-stricken patient, but listened in vain, if in the midst of its thoughtless frivolity it listened at all, for the calm counsel of the doctor who should diagnose the disease.

Times have not changed much since these things occurred; only the rumbling has grown a little louder, that is all. Men are beginning to look askance now, and to talk about the question of social relations as the question of the future. Yet there were some, even then, whose ear was keen enough to hear the distant roar of the storm coming over the mountains.

Mike had often desired to see Mr. Russell, but had never had the opportunity until one morning, when he was detained at the bank in the absence of one of the day employés. At the noon hour the directors were accustomed to meet and discuss financial concerns. Among these were Mr. DeCamp, who was now the president of the bank, and Mr. Russell. It was shortly after the conversation already alluded to had taken place on the night of the sociable. Several strikes had been inaugurated, and many bitter words were uttered by some of those present who represented large concerns. At last Mike from the next room caught the voice of Mr. Russell (though he did not know to whom it belonged till afterward). The earnestness of the tones attracted his attention, and he could not help listening to what he said.

"You all know I'm no communist," he heard him exclaim; "and I agree with you that we cannot deal too

summarily with the hand which, in this free country, unfurls the red flag. There always have been two classes, and there always will be. 'The man who thinks will rule the man who toils.' If communism could wipe out every other form of aristocracy, there would still remain the aristocracy of brain. That will exist so long as men are men. If there were an equal division to-morrow, some would have more and some less by the day after to-morrow, just as surely as the wind forms the snow into drifts and hollows. That's one side. But I tell you again," rising from his chair in the earnestness of his feeling, "there never can be any sympathy between these classes until we who have wealth and power are willing to sympathize. And if we do not," raising his finger impressively, "though men may shut their eyes and refuse to believe it, remember, the only thing which is certain is the unexpected. These present relations cannot exist forever. In this country there are increasing numbers of intelligent workingmen who feel that there is much that is wrong in the present relation of the employer to the employés. In many cases the only difference between the old-time slavery and the present wage system is that under slavery there was a sense of moral obligation on the part of the master to provide for the slave when he could no longer work. The white slave and the black are worse off to-day; for while they must work just as hard for only enough to keep soul and body together, in their old age they have not even a master to care for them."

"What can you do?" interrupted one of the gentlemen.

Turning toward him, he continued,—

"What can we do? Gentlemen, I believe it is true

that at the base of every social evil there lies a social wrong. If these men did not have some real grievance, they never could have held together as they have. I, for one, do not intend to pursue the ostrich policy of simply shutting my eyes. No man can judge of this question from the outside. Either by experience or sympathy, he has to judge of it from within."

"But what can we do?" repeated the same voice again.

"This we can do. Thomas Carlyle was right when he declared, 'The beginning and the end of what is the matter with us in these days is,—that we have forgotten God.' I tell you, gentlemen, there never has been any better rule laid down for business than that which was enunciated by the shores of Jordan, 'Thou shalt love.'" Every breath was hushed as he proceeded, in calm and clear but earnest tones:

"It is the people who, with the spirit of the Galilean, are accepting wealth and influence not as a right, but as a trust, who are to save our country from anarchy, if it is to be saved. It is they who accept that wealth and influence not as a trust, but as a right, who, if an uprising comes, will be 'the Fathers of the Revolution.' They are our dangerous classes, not the poor nor the rich, but the rich who do not know how to use their riches.

"Peter Cooper was rich; William E. Dodge was rich, but not one socialist was made by them. It is that rich man, whoever he may be, who is willing 'the dear public shall be damned,' who is a firebrand to-day in our American society. It is easy to denounce the voice of a Jocking Valley mob; and it may be the voice of a heathen. But it is the voice of a heathen sea-captain crying to a Jonah slumbering peacefully in the hold of the ship, while the

storm is brewing on the deep, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and call upon thy God if so be we perish not.'"

"Beware all ye who, with eyes shut to Poverty's helpless pleading, are rocking in easy selfish pleasure! Jonah repented, but not until he had been thrown into the sea. 'Is it a revolt?' cried the French king, of the messenger who with blanched cheek hurried to tell him of the uprising in Paris in 1830. 'No, sire,' was the answer, 'it is a revolution.'"

As Mike went home, he scratched his head several times, and then muttered,—

"Sure, Peggy, an' I belave it's roight ye are. There's bad people among the rich, and there's bad people among the poor. But it's not riches nor poverty that makes 'em bad; it's the koind o' heart they've got inside of 'em."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE STORY OUR GRANDFATHERS TOLD.

In the process of development with most young people, there is usually a period when their friends and well-wishers are inclined to think that they ought to be put into a bandbox, and kept hidden from the public eye for the space of at least two or three years. It is when they are just entering the adolescent age; the season of scrawny girlhood and uproarious boyhood.

We will pass gently over this period in the history of Katie and Waldemar, leaving them each in their respective bandbox until the time of their emergence

draweth nigh. Not that we would lead the reader to infer that either experienced this condition in all its fulness. The child, who had inherited her high-born mother's beauty and her father's nobility of nature, never ceased to appear attractive; the morning star is beautiful, only it will not compare with the morning sun. In all this world there is nothing so entrancing as the early womanhood of a pure and graceful woman. Such was Katie at the age of seventeen.

Neither had Waldemar ever been particularly uproarious; but the bandbox was not without its uses, even for him. If I were to lift its cover high enough for the reader to look within, he might perhaps see an occasional black eye or bloody nose received in some fight with "another fellow." He might possibly, as from the ventriloquist's box in the museum, hear some vociferous shouting as to whether or not that ball was a foul. So, as I do not wish to prejudice the public in reference to this young man, I will simply, "with the kind permission of the audience," keep on the lid and mark it "charity;" as, after some years of experience, I have learned to do under similar circumstances in real life. Those of us who have tried it have thus far never lost anything by always hoping for the best. I trust the reader may not be disappointed by following the same plan in reference to the gentlemanly young bruiser who now engages our attention.

One or two instances, however, I will relate, once more "with the kind permission of the audience," simply because of their connection with the events which are to follow.

When Katie was fourteen she entered the high school.

Waldemar was then in the third year of his studies in the same institution. Of course he belonged to the base ball nine, and was one of the best players among them. They were to have a match with the "Grovetown Highflyers," and whatever spare time they could find was devoted to practising for the coming contest. Near the building was a large field where they assembled for this purpose, before the duties of the day began and after they were finished. One morning Katie was on her way to school when the boys were practising in the field. Waldemar chanced to be handling the bat, and just as she was passing he struck the ball with all his might. Before they could scarcely cry out it had shot past the first base, and with fearful momentum had knocked the child senseless to the ground. Terror-stricken they all rushed to where she lay, scarcely knowing what to do. In a moment Waldemar, grasping the situation, pushed through their midst, and, lifting her in his arms, carried her to the house of a physician near at hand. The blow, while it was severe for the time, proved not to be a dangerous one, though the missile had struck just above the temple.

"We can be very thankful it did not fall two inches below," remarked the physician, while applying the bandage.

The young man hastened away to secure a carriage to convey her home. Of course he could not but call the next day to see how she was; and the next, and the next. The third day, when he stopped on his way to school, he found her so far recovered that she was starting out for herself; so they walked on together.

It was in this way Cupid began his mischievous

pranks, though, like the sly little youngster that he is, he kept himself carefully concealed and did not permit the tip of his arrow to appear from behind the trees; so that for a considerable time neither Katie nor Waldemar entertained the slightest suspicion that he was anywhere in the vicinity. It was quite surprising, however, how frequently the most convenient route to Waldemar's destination, in whatever part of the city it might chance to be, led him directly in front of the Russell mansion. Of course there was no design on his part in all this, and the habit of passing that way did not come into existence at once; it did not spring into being, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, full grown. It came, rather, like the opium-eating habit, by very delicate degrees; but like that same usage, it was very despotic when at last it made its presence known. By the time some weeks had gone by, even if his direct route lay in an exactly opposite direction, he was deeply impressed with the fact that he needed more exercise than the ordinary walk would afford; a growing young man like himself required to be out-doors, so that he quite severely chided himself on his sedentary habits, though no one who was at all acquainted with his record on the ball field would have thought of attributing that propensity to him in the slightest degree. Such thoughts, however, were only temporary even in his own mind; for when it so chanced, as it did on his way to school, that the nearest route led him in that direction, he never could find time under any circumstances to take a longer path, but always kept to the straight way leading directly past her house. Of course he seldom saw the two bright eyes at the window which soon learned to watch for his coming,

but I may say they were there just the same. Frequently after leaving her, when they had walked home from school together, he would whisper to himself,—

"She has more sense than the rest of them. She is going to make a fine woman when she grows up, if she don't get spoiled like all the others."

The match between the high school nine and the Grovetown Highflyers had at length come off, and the former had been defeated. Perhaps it was for this reason that Waldemar did not take exactly the same interest in the game as he had experienced formerly. He seldom waited after school now to practise, but always met Katie somewhere along the route, by mere accident, and they walked on together, as their homes were near one another on the same street.

About a year after these occurrences, the time approached for the class to which he belonged to graduate. He was not the valedictorian; the young man who was had earned the position honestly, but he never earned anything else to speak of as long as he lived. The class prize had been with him, as it has been with so many others before him, an end instead of a means; and when that was won, the apex of the young man's earthly existence was reached. He carried that glory with him through life, and died ultimately while keeping boarders. Waldemar stood the third in his class, but he graduated with a good chest and a sound frame. Often in after-years he was accustomed to say, "When the real fight of life began, the valedictorian in my class found he had used up all his ammunition in the drill-room while firing at the target. I had used enough to learn to shoot, but fortunately had saved some for the battle."

Among the beautiful flowers which were handed up to him on that triumphant day was a little bouquet of white roses sprinkled with jessamine, which he prized more than all the rest. The card attached to it showed the name of Katie Russell in her own handwriting. It was the first written communication of any kind which he had ever received from her. He felt half ashamed of himself for caring for it.

"She's only a little girl," he said. "I am eighteen and she but fifteen. What right have I to think of her?"

But he thought of her nevertheless. And when he went away to college he carried the card with him, and many a time after the lessons of the day were finished did he bring it forth and spend a little while in dreaming over it.

Once during that first year of his absence Mrs. Russell called on his mother, Mrs. Grant, and took Katie with her. It was a delightful day in summer, and her hostess proposed a walk through the garden. They came to an old tree and sat down beneath its branches.

"This is a most picturesque spot," remarked Mrs. Russell. "I see you have steps leading up into the branches."

"Yes, that is some work of Waldemar's. He was always delighted to be busy in the garden and among the trees."

Katie climbed up the stairs. At their summit there was a rustic bower so arranged as to be almost hidden from those standing below. With a sigh she sat down and looked about her, and listened to the birds singing, and the brook only a little distance off rippling merrily on its way. She had heard nothing from Waldemar

since he had left, except such stray bits of news as might pass current between the two families. She felt very lonely, and fell to wondering whether he ever thought of her any more. While engaged in these meditations, her eye fell upon some initials cut in the bark. She stood up that she might decipher them: K. R. The voice of her mother just then was heard calling her from below, and telling her it was time to go home.

"Yes, mamma," she answered.

As she descended the steps, the birds seemed to sing more cheerfully and the brook to ripple more musically than they ever had before.

Since then another year had passed. The bandbox period was now over. She was seventeen and he twenty. It was his second vacation which he was spending at home. There was no longer any need for him to hide his interest in Katie; for the test of time had assured him of its reality, though it was sometimes a very perplexing question with him how he, who had thus far stood like the leader of a Greek chorus, taking no part in such foolishness himself, but only making remarks while watching those who did, should fall in love at all. Most of his youthful acquaintances had already had six Dianas, at whose feet they had prostrated themselves, some of them when hardly out of pinafores, and in it all he had only discovered sport for the sportful.

"I never thought a young school-girl would ever have any influence over me," he remarked. "But then she isn't like the rest of them." (By the way, what an original discovery that is, when each of us, in reference to our own chosen one, makes it for the first time!) "I suppose that love, when it does come, is all the worse

to a fellow like me, who has never pretended to know much about it anyway. It's like the smallpox: most dangerous to the man that has never been vaccinated with the virus. Perhaps if I had had a touch of the varioloid I should not be so bad now."

He could not tell whether his affection was returned, but he could guess. And that is the kind of a riddle which most men are not poor at guessing. So he guessed, and, as the result, he found it necessary to go almost every evening to Mr. Russell's house to study again the terms of the conundrum.

The house stood back from the street, and a spreading lawn separated it from the too curious gaze of the passers-by. One still evening in autumn, after he had been diligently studying the riddle for many weeks, he and Katie were sitting together on the front veranda. An old elm stood near by, and a morning-glory, twining itself about the trunk, had run up into the branches.

"What a fine old tree!" said he, looking up.

"What do you think of the flowers it bears?"

"They belong to the vine."

"But the vine belongs to the tree," she answered, playfully.

"And so you think the flowers belong to the tree?"

"Do they not?"

"Why, yes, if you say so. I wouldn't contradict a lady, you know."

After a moment's pause he continued,—

"I suppose, according to Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences, everything in nature represents some spiritual truth. I wonder what that would represent?"

"Beauty and strength?" suggested Katie.

"Yes; the beauty of a woman and the strength of a man."

"Then we'll have to call them brother and sister."

"Well, not exactly;" hesitating.

"Why not?"

"Because," he continued, "they seem so thoroughly contented. My observation is, that a brotherly elm is always prancing off after some other vine; and the sisterly vine concludes to throw out her flowers for some other elm."

"Indeed? I have never had a brother, so I cannot tell. You ought to know. I suppose I should be left to bloom alone if I had a dozen."

"I know one who would not be such an one as that." He leaned forward, resting one arm on the iron railing and the other on his knee. She glanced up quickly for a moment, and his eyes were looking earnestly into hers. "One who thought he never should care for woman; who looked upon them all as butterflies, having little thought or interest in that which was real; but who has been taught his error by the silent influence of a noble life. I think you can guess his name, Katie, can you not?"

"Then you want me to be your sister?"

"Well—no—I cannot say that."

"You are very complimentary, certainly. Why not?"

He leaned forward again and took her hand in his, as he answered quietly, but with the deepest feeling,—

"Because that would prevent my hoping that you might ever become my wife."

Now I am aware that, according to the authority of very many novelists, she ought to have "arched her

neck," and have "drawn back with distended nostrils." At the risk of being counted heterodox, however, I am compelled to state that this young lady did nothing of the kind. At the still further risk of being doubly dyed in heterodoxy, I am forced to declare that I do not believe anybody else ever did. It cannot be done. Sitting alone in the library one day, with one of these novels open at the affectionate page, the writer made a personal experiment of trying to "arch his neck" according to directions, and the only result of his experiment was a complete failure, with threatened curvature of the spine. So he ceased his efforts, and reached the conviction that the novelists must be mistaken.

Katie did not arch her neck at all. She did not even try. She simply looked up, as many of our mothers and grandmothers have before, with a sweet, pure, innocent smile, and just a little pressure of Waldemar's hand. But he knew what it meant; and the summer winds swept through the leaves of the old elm, so that the tree and the vine waved in benediction; and the rocking of the branches awoke some birds who had gone to sleep in their nests, so that they began to chirp; and the moon looked down and smiled over all. And they were very happy.

## CHAPTER XV.

THERE'S NOTHING HALF SO SWEET IN LIFE AS LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

THAT night, after Waldemar had returned home and all the members of the family had retired to their rooms, Katie sat for a long time on the side of her bed, with her hands clasped, deeply involved in thought. On first entering her apartments she had let down her hair and removed her dress. Now as she sat there in her white garments, the moonlight streaming in upon her and illuminating her face, her golden locks falling in graceful disorder about her shoulders and arms, Mrs. Felix herself could scarcely have recognized the little waif, with the pinched and frightened face, whom once she haunted like a tiger's ghost.

She looked like a beautiful spirit, and she felt like one. The old world with its clods and its rumblings had passed away; and it seemed as though she were being carried in tender arms through some far-off realm, where there were no more heartaches nor feverish anxieties; where all troubles had ceased, and quiet voices sang of peace and rest for evermore. Is there anything more delicious than the dreaming of that first love?

She thought of the vision which came to her long ago, on that cold night in her lonely garret, of the angel child, and of how she had said, "I cannot take you with me yet, but I will soon. Come and I will go with you, and then I must return beyond the skies, for 'tis very

beautiful where I dwell, and you shall dwell there too, but not yet."

She remembered the barren plain with the grim mountains staring down, and then the sunlight which shone about her afterwards; and she whispered to herself, "Is it, then, all true, and am I there at last?"

Blessed hallucination of us all, that we are ever mistaking the waters of Elim for the ripple of the Jordan: fancying the mirage of the desert beyond is the land of Canaan! Who of us could have courage for to-morrow if it were not for these day-dream hours; if we could see all which lies before us, and could know indeed that the wilderness may be so long, and the promised land so far away?

As the time approached for Waldemar to return to his college, many were the delightful walks which they took together. Groveland, a beautiful city and true to its appellation, was surrounded with woods and parks, abounding in shaded drives and quiet leafy nooks, and little tumbling, laughing rills. The foliage was beginning to change its color, and much of it had fallen. They were halcyon days which they spent, wandering together under the old trees, the dead leaves rustling beneath their feet and the branches whispering gently above them. Nor were their talks mere lovers' sighings; Waldemar always had something new to tell of the stones and the wild-flowers which they met in their pathway.

"Look," he said one day, when they had seated themselves in a quiet little dell by the side of a brook, "here are some pebbles that are well rounded, and here are some which are angular. These are round because they have been severely handled by the waters and the rough

edges have been ground off; and these are angular because they've had a good quiet time all by themselves, and have not known what it meant to be tumbled about." Then he added, thoughtfully, "I guess in the end a fellow isn't hurt very much by having to rough it through the world."

"Do you speak from experience?"

"No, not exactly." And he looked at her with a smile, as though to suggest that the waves of tribulation were not very cruel to him at that present moment. "But I've noticed that the fellows in college who seem to stand for very much are almost always the fellows who have to hoe potatoes to pay their way through. Do you know," he added, in his enthusiastic way, lifting his hand to give emphasis to his speech, "I sometimes almost envy them. They are a great deal more likely to do something in life than those of us who have everything provided."

"Self-made men?"

"No, they are not self-made men, for their poverty is a constant incentive. The self-made man is the one who isn't urged on by any such goad, but who, with every temptation which wealth and leisure afford, becomes something, when all his circumstances are telling him that he needn't do it if he doesn't choose to. He is the man most worthy of honor; Charles Sumner, for example."

"So you are afraid you will not amount to anything because you have not had enough trouble. You think you were born too rich. It's a good thing to know it; the battle's half won if you know the danger."

"Well, I do know it; thanks to the father who brought me up; and I pray God every day that I may

become as poor as a church mouse, if it 'll give me more grit. I don't want my soil to be so rich that the root will rot."

He stooped and plucked some golden-rod which grew at their feet, and continued, as he held it up: "Do you know why we have so many beautiful blossoms in these northern woods? It's because there's just enough sunshine and moisture to encourage them, and not enough to destroy them. When you pass through a tropical forest you don't see many flowers. The sap is all used up in the leaves and branches, so there isn't enough left to feed the blossom, and it doesn't grow. It has too much sunshine and moisture; it's what the gardeners call 'running all to leaf.' Katie," and his eyes glowed, "I want to be something; and I'm willing to pay the price if need be. I want my life to flower, so that when I'm gone I may leave something behind me the memory of which shall be noble and true and real, even though, like the mignonette, I shall begin to die in the blossoming."

At last these happy days were over. Waldemar had returned to his duties in the college, and Katie once more had resumed the routine life which makes up nine-tenths of the existence even of the heroine of a novel. Now it was the time for her to live in the memory of those delightful days. With her little phaeton she would often drive through the same roads, where every turn reminded her of him. Here was an old tree where they had stopped that he might describe to her how the roots, in the shady, sandy soil, had to go farther for their food than those in other places, where the

earth was moist and full of nutriment; "just as," he had said, "a family living in the midst of poverty must work harder than another living in the midst of wealth." Here was where he had plucked a stem and told her of how the tree breathed through its leaves, which at the same time acted in the capacity of lungs and stomach and heart.

"These are little things," he had repeated, "but the tree is like the rest of us: it depends for the sweetness of its life upon little things."

Sometimes she would fasten her pony at the same spot where he had been accustomed to fasten it for her, and wander along the same lonely paths, and rest on the same rustic bench where they had sat together.

How patiently she wrote and rewrote her letters to him before sending them off! And after she had sent them, how she recalled them as she lay awake, and sought to discover some foolish thing she had said, or some word she had chanced to misspell! And when the answer came and she hurried away that none might see her read it, how the blood tingled as she blushed, even there by herself, when her eyes feasted upon the opening words "My darling"! And when the postman came on the expected day, and brought nothing from him, how her heart sank, and she wondered what she might do to cause the time to pass rapidly until he should call again on his next round!

His letters were not like hers. He never thought of copying them as she did. He wrote as he felt at the moment, and there was no counting on what the next epistle would be. There was, in fact, as much diversity between his notes at different times as there was between

William Cowper's hymns and his interesting ballad of John Gilpin. Of course this element of surprise made them doubly interesting to Katie, as she never could know what to expect, except that each missive would be filled with the spirit of tenderness and buoyancy and good cheer. Sometimes he quoted poetry, but not very often; and even when he did, he would very likely turn it into parody before completing the quotation. Occasionally she wished that they dealt more in sentiment; but though they usually were flavored with a certain amount of that ingredient, his sense of merriment generally spoiled it all, or left it incomplete, while he ran on to tell of some mishap which had befallen one of the "profs," or of the last prank played by the students.

As she sits in her room on one of these days when the expected letter has not arrived, seeking to comfort herself in her disappointment by rereading the old ones, perhaps we can steal unseen behind her chair and look over her shoulder. The first two pages she has already read and laid aside, so we shall have to begin just here in the middle:

"By the way, you remember we were talking one day as we sat in the woods about the pebbles, and of how they were rounded by the action of the water and the rough places ground off; and we compared it to the experiences of men about us. We have here, as janitor, an irascible Englishman, who at the present time, under the treatment of the boys, is undergoing that delightful process from day to day.

"Of course I do not pretend to notice it, as I am now a junior, and shall next year be a 'grave and reverend senior;' but I sometimes find it very hard to

maintain any appearance of dignity in the presence of the hilarious freshmen and sophs, when they are detailing some of his experiences, and imitating his peculiarities of manner and expression. I suppose it is allowable for even a dignified junior to laugh quietly and all to himself. You know the lecturer told us in the lecture that even a clergyman, when he got away from home and felt sure no one could see him, might sometimes be found following an organ-grinder with a monkey for several blocks.

"The other day some of the students placed themselves under his bed, just before he was about to retire; and when his deep breathings assured them that 'Nature's sweet restorer' had made him oblivious to surrounding objects, they lifted their backs against one side of the bed, and gradually raised themselves up, so that the mattress formed an inclined plane. Of course he rolled off, and they in the darkness jumped out of the window, which was on the ground-floor, before he had an opportunity to discover them.

"The most amusing part of it all was, that when he had been living in South America, several years ago, he had been fearfully frightened by an earthquake; and on this occasion, when he came to himself, he concluded that this had been a repetition of the same kind of an adventure, so he rushed out into the field, and sat up all night long waiting for another quake. In the morning some of the students met him, and he was full of his experiences. They told him the real cause of the disturbance, and he swore vengeance against the guilty parties if he could discover them. They pretended to pacify him, and advised him to appear ignorant that anything unusual

had occurred, and in case the students asked him how he slept, simply to reply that he was not *inclined* to sleep. Of course he didn't see any double meaning in it, and accordingly made that reply to all the questionings of the boys during the day, and was each time filled with surprise and wrath that they should immediately burst into a roar of laughter. When one of the theologues from the seminary asked him at what angle he was inclined, it dawned upon him that they were making game of him, and he strode off exclaiming,—

"'By Jocks! Hi thought Hi was comin' to a ministerial hinstitute; but hit's a reg'lar 'ell on hearth.'

"Yesterday they did what seemed almost cruel, but it was very funny. It was St. Patrick's day, and from time immemorial the boys have been accustomed to select it for a frolic. He had just brought in a load of wood, and left it standing outside in the cart while he went in to quietly enjoy his breakfast. In the mean time about twenty of them took the load, piece by piece, and carried it up into the cupola of the college building. Then they took apart the cart and carried that up in the same way; after which they put it all together again and loaded it. When he came out and looked for his wagon, and saw it just as he had left it, only apparently carried through the air and landed on the top of the building, his wrath and astonishment knew no bounds.

"'By Jocks!' he said, 'boys, I believe in fun. But, by Jocks, that's carryin' a joke too far.'

"They asked him if he would have been better pleased if they had carried it only to the third story. While he was standing there gesticulating and promising all sorts of judgment for 'the hidle youngsters,' some of them

came to the conclusion that he needed to be cooled off; so they went to the top story and emptied a whole bucket of water down on him. He was too hot, however, to receive it with any advantage; it only turned to steam and caused an explosion. It seemed to have washed off all his angles in a moment, as he bowled off toward the stairs leading to the third story. They had been expecting this result, and, with a degree of generalship which promises well for this country if ever it shall again be in need of officers to lead it to glory, they had prepared for an attack. At the top of the last stairway they had stationed an old stove, and piled by its side a large amount of pipe. Then they stood waiting the approach of the enemy. Presently it was whispered, 'Here he comes,' as they heard his ejaculations from below, gradually growing louder, and the clatter made by the many feet which were following at his heels. The flights are situated one beneath another, so that those coming up cannot see what may be on the stairs above them till they are just about to ascend. On he comes, like Robert Burns's toothache,—

> 'Wi' gnawing vengeance;
> Tearing his nerves wi' bitter pang,
> Like racking engines!'

Now he turns round to ascend, two steps at a time. His coat-tails stand out straight, and his breathings are heavy and hot. A few more such manly bounds and justice will be satisfied. The staircase is exceptionally long, and he is two-thirds toward the top. Suddenly he hears an awful racket, and looking up, he discovers that the old stove and stove-pipe are making very encouraging progress toward the bottom. What shall he do?

Achilles himself would not like under such circumstances to run into a 'Sunshine No. 15.' For a moment he falters, but time is precious and events are pressing.

'His not to question why,
His not to make reply.'

His but to get out of that locality just as precipitately as he possibly can.

"The eagerness with which he approached was only the crawling of a snail compared with the eagerness with which he now goes in the other direction. He came up two steps at a time, and he goes down three. He puts his whole mind on it. He realizes that the other party is going him one better, and coming down four. He would like to 'pass;' begins to think that he has a 'misdeal,' but the other party is 'forcing him,' and it looks very much as though the game were going to prove a 'rubber.' He sighs for 'Hold Hengland,' and shoots on. But alas! How vain are all human efforts when competing with destiny! 'Sunshine No. 15' beats him, and comes out ahead. Fortunately, however, it did not come on his head; he saved that for his own use, and landed there himself.

"For a few moments he lay among the ruins; then he permitted himself to be led away by some of the spectators, and as he hung loose and limp in their stalwart arms he was heard to exclaim,—

"'By Jocks! Hif these are to be the future ministers of Hamerica, by Jocks, the Lord 'ave mercy on the churches!'

"Hello! there goes the dinner-bell. Good-by, dar-

ling; I must hurry down to the hall. I hope for chicken, but I fear something else.

"Hear it not, Duncan, for 'tis the knell, that summons thee to heaven or else to—hash.' "

Though in his letters to Katie, Waldemar might laugh at these occurrences, and even among the students themselves might show his amusement at whatever there was in them which was ridiculous, nevertheless he did not hesitate to condemn them and to refuse any participation in them.

"I'll run with the swiftest of you," he would say, "and you know nobody enjoys a good bout with the gloves or a game of ball more than I do; but I don't think much of that wit which is like a wasp's, where all the strength is in its sting."

"Ah, but we must have some fun!"

"That's all right. Have all the fun you can; and yet I don't believe a truly noble fellow will find fun in that which wilfully gives pain to another."

"But weren't you one of those who got into Ferguson's room when he was asleep, and put molasses in his pants, when you were a Soph yourself? And didn't you laugh as heartily as any when the boys called fire, and he jumped into them, and got all stuck up?"

"Yes, I did. But that was because he was, metaphorically, 'stuck up' beforehand. And I believe that he ought to be convinced of what a disagreeable condition it is. There's a difference between doing these things when you really want to take a fellow down for his own good, and when you do it simply for the sport of laughing at his discomfort. Ferguson, as you know, is a very different kind of a boy than he was before. I

believe that one of the chief advantages of college life is that the conceited fellow gets the conceit knocked out of him; and every man's a proper prey for his own benefit, I say. Besides that, our class did that to him because he was the ringleader among those who tossed poor helpless Johnny Gorham in a blanket until he became sick; and they called that fun. Think of taking a young fellow, timid and shrinking, who has scarcely ever been beyond the farm, and has just come among us for the first time, and then hazing him, and finding sport in his terror and pain! I say it's brutal; and the fellow who did it deserved everything he got. And he who can stand by and see a game of that kind going on and not feel indignant, isn't half a man. If I understand manliness, it consists not only in loving what is good, but in hating what is mean. I don't care a cent for virtue if it hasn't any fight in it when it sees a wrong."

Thus the year rolled round until, in due time, autumn came again, and then a repetition of the long strolls and confidential talks; of whispered vows which the rustling trees repeated, and which the brooks laughed at while they rippled on their way. Then came the last year in college, which was passed very much as the others had been, only bringing with it perhaps an added sense of responsibility, causing the letters which Katie received to deal less with fun, and to show a deeper seriousness than had been shown before.

What should he do after his graduation? Waldemar was eager to be at some life-work; and when a young man of twenty-two is engaged to be married to a beautiful young lady of nineteen, it is really surprising how easily he is convinced that the world will rapidly go to

rack and ruin unless he throws his energies into its midst to rescue it at once. Mr. Grant, however, was a man of sturdy sense, and put forth every effort to induce his son to improve the opportunities which his youth afforded him, before entering upon the trying duties of professional life.

"It is very true," he wrote, "that education alone cannot make a man; if a man's a man, he's a man for a' that, and if he isn't a man, then for a' that he isn't a man. It can't turn pine timber into hickory, but it can teach him how to carve the timber that he's got." He himself had never had the training which he wanted Waldemar to have, but he had sound sense; he was an educated man, though not a learned one.

After the young man had gone through considerable of a struggle, the counsels of his father prevailed. They had all the more weight because he scarcely felt as yet that he was ready to decide on his profession. It was a sad day for Katie when the letter arrived from him stating that he had determined, after his next visit home, to go to Germany, and that he should probably not return for three years. She only needed to be assured that it was wise, however, to acquiesce in it most heartily. When people have had as much experience as she had had in her short life, disappointments cannot disappoint very much. Such people seldom formulate a plan without ending the last sentence with an interrogation-mark. A man has lived to little purpose if he can be very much surprised after thirty. And with her, forty years had been compressed into nineteen. So after a few days of secret sorrow, she wrote a letter to him full of hope and cheer. She slyly told him that it was a wise decision for

him to "tarry at Jericho until his beard be grown." The time would pass rapidly, for they could write every week; and three years, after all, were not very many out of a lifetime.

"And so they fell by thousands,—those unnamed demigods!" exclaimed Kossuth, in telling, thirty years ago, of the silent courage of his countrymen. And yet they had the noise of the battle to urge them on. What shall we say of those women who, in silence so profound that the only sound they hear is the heavy throbbing of their own hearts, with smiling faces meet the disappointments and the battle-shocks of life, that they may bring strength and cheer to those who stand beside them in the fight? We do not have to look very far for heroines. Have you ever thought, Friend, that perhaps there may be one seated over against you at your own table?

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### "A JEWEL OF GOLD IN A SWINE'S SNOUT."

"So Waldemar is going to Germany," exclaimed Mr. Russell, with a sly glance over at Katie, as they were seated at breakfast one morning.

Nothing had been said to him concerning the engagement, as nobody was supposed to know of it except Mrs. Russell, from whom the young girl never concealed anything. But many a less shrewd man has concluded without having to be told, when a young gentleman has had occasion to call several times each week to show his

horses to a young lady, and to get her judgment concerning their speed for two or three hours at an outing, that in all probability they were making arrangements with old Father Time to let them have a chaise out of his own stable, which should carry them both to the end of the journey.

When Mr. Russell made the above remark, Katie was exceeding desirous to appear indifferent, and so, like most young ladies under such circumstances, blushed all over her face. The piece of beef on her plate, moreover, suddenly proved to be very tough (it was in fact the tenderloin), and required all her attention to see that it was properly cut.

"What do you think of my going with him?" asked Mrs. Russell, who had long been contemplating a journey to Carlsbad on account of her health.

Katie looked up inquiringly. Mr. Russell, who had been mindful for some time of his wife's failing strength, and to whom the physician had expressed his judgment that the German baths would do her good, toyed with his fork thoughtfully, and then said, as though still deliberating,—

"Possibly it may be the wisest thing to do. I have been trying to arrange my business so that we might go together. I almost thought I had succeeded, but these inflammatory speeches which have recently been delivered in our city cause me to fear that there may be trouble ahead which might demand my presence."

Mrs. Russell made no reply, for she saw that he was engaged in meditation. After a few moments he continued,—

"There are a great many men out of work now; mul-

titudes among them have lived from hand to mouth, never saving anything, and these times make them desperate. They are simply waiting, in their ignorance and prejudice, to be set on fire by some such fanatics as have been permitted to address them recently. If those speeches had been delivered in any country in Europe, the men who uttered them would have been imprisoned or hung; and that justly. It seems strange to me that the government will punish a man for inciting one individual to one murder, and permit scores of criminals, who have been banished from their own country for their seditions, to incite multitudes to wholesale robbery and assassination. I think that is an instance where the boasted liberty of speech may descend into license. Why, look at it," he continued, becoming so much interested in his subject that he forgot the text from which he started, "in that incendiary fire of a fortnight ago there was over a million of dollars' worth of property which went up in smoke. If these were not insane, they would realize that the poorer the city becomes in which they live the poorer they must become. If they, by their wickedness, make it unsafe for employers to continue in business, what's going to become of their wages? That's an illustration in point, of which I heard yesterday. John Roberts has been in the lumber business for twenty years, but he is going out of it since his stock has been burned up, because he says it's no longer safe. There are over a hundred men whom he has been employing, representing more than four hundred people, when you include these men's families, who in these most pressing times have had their bread taken right out of their mouths. And by whom? John Roberts? Not at all.

By these travelling agitators, who have neither property nor reputation at stake, but who by their inflammatory speeches are saying to him, 'You shan't continue in business.' And who does it hurt? John Roberts? Of course not. The fire was for him simply a good sale of his lumber; he was fully insured, and did not lose a dollar. He received a cool hundred and fifty thousand from the companies within a week. He can take that money and go anywhere in the world where better protection will be afforded for his property. No, the people who have been smitten, who must stay here and starve, are these four hundred men, women, and children. And yet those same folks, and others like them, will sit and drink in these pernicious doctrines of so-called socialism, but of what is in reality only a destructive bloody-handed communism, and make the rafters ring with their applause of these travelling scoundrels. When I see these things I can believe that what Carlyle said of England is equally true of America, that 'England had a population of thirty millions,—mostly fools.'" He took a drink of water in a nervous way as though to cool his indignation, and then exclaimed,—

"But, dear me! What were we talking about? Oh, about your going to Europe with young Grant. Well, I think it a very good idea, provided you can get ready in time and secure a passage."

"There will not be any trouble about it, I am told, because at this time in the year the tourists are all coming home, and the outward-bound vessels are comparatively empty."

"I wish I could arrange to go with you. It will be pretty lonely for us both. It's the first time we have

ever been separated for so long since we were married, you know; but if this little girl will stay with me here," and he smilingly looked at Katie, "I guess we can manage to get on without committing suicide."

The "little girl" looked up and smiled in return, but said nothing. Thus it was decided that Mrs. Russell should accompany Waldemar as far as Carlsbad, and that Mr. Russell and Katie should stay at home, with the prospect of joining her as soon as his business might permit.

During the winter, accordingly, Katie busied herself with her studies and her household work, seeking as best she could to fill the place of the one who had been a mother to her for all these years. And she succeeded well. Once she was left without a cook, but she neither sat down to cry nor had any occasion for doing so.

"In a world of such rapid changes as this every rich woman ought to be fitted for a poor man's wife," Mrs. Russell had often said. "Solomon describes a true woman as 'one that worketh with her hands,' and the old Anglo-Saxon term from which the very word 'lady' was derived meant one who was the loaf-ward, the bread-guardian. A 'spinster' was the spinning woman of the family, and even though we live in different times than when the Emperor Augustus himself wore no other garments than those which had been woven by his sister or wife or daughter, every woman ought to know thoroughly the work of her own home."

These remarks had been made at the table, and, on one occasion, had called forth the response from Mr. Russell that "he knew more than one spinster who was faithful to the derivation of her name, even at the present day;

the only difference being that instead of staying at home and spinning yarn for herself, she went from house to house spinning yarns for the neighbors. And that, so far as his observation had extended, if the men of this generation should depend in any great degree to the weaving ability of their wives for their garments, the costume of Adam before the fall would be very likely to become much more fashionable than it was at the present time."

For several years, one day in each week at least, Katie had had full charge of the culinary department. So she bustled about in an old dress, and by the time Mr. Russell came home had the dinner smoking hot and daintily cooked, while the bread (that Scylla and Charybdis of the average cook) was done to a tempting light brown.

When the Sabbath came, she took charge of the same class to which she had come on that memorable Sunday with Jane so long ago. She looked into the eager faces of the girls, and thought she saw herself, as she was then, in each one of them; and she tried to ask herself, in expounding the lesson, what would have been helpful to her in those days when the Sunday-school was the source of the happiest hours she enjoyed during the week. No wonder she proved so good a teacher that the superintendent determined that when Mrs. Russell should have returned he would persuade Katie to take a class of her own. The deepest lesson to be learned by every one who would be a guide to another is that success depends upon thoroughly putting himself in that other's life. The greatest of all teachers "took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

Thus the winter passed away, brightened by the reception of letters every week from Mrs. Russell and Wal-

demar, the latter of whom had settled down to faithful work in the university town of Heidelberg.

Katie had hoped that by summer Mr. Russell and herself might be able to leave for Europe to join his wife, who had sufficiently improved to be able to travel through the continent. Of course they would visit the old town on the Necker, and Waldemar and she would have an opportunity of meeting once more. The young people often spoke of it in their letters, and could scarcely wait for the days to pass. Affairs in the city grew more threatening, however, than before, and Mr. Russell would very often be detained in conference with his colleagues till late at night.

"No hope of going this summer, my dear," he said one day as they talked together at the table. "The city is full of bad men, and no one knows what a day may bring forth. Some of our own works have had to shut down temporarily; but, thanks to the system with which we've been conducting them, our men have generally learned to save enough to tide them over for a good while yet. Some of the poorer ones among those turned out we've employed as special watchmen, though we have a number of volunteers who would have gladly guarded the premises for nothing. They are as much aroused about these incendiary fires occurring every day as we are. They realize that in a certain sense they are partners with us, and so feel as much interest in the works as we do ourselves. It is only another evidence that the right thing is always the wise thing. Other firms may have saved perhaps the bonus we have given our men in addition to the wages, but they stand a good chance of losing a great deal more than that bonus now. I don't believe there

are ten men in our employ but would fight like tigers if the mob sought to attack us."

"But how do your works differ from others, papa?"

"We differ from some others in this: that we are determined not to be simply just, but generous. We are not by any means alone in this. There are several firms in this country and Europe who are pursuing the same plan. Doubtless many others would, if they knew exactly how to get away from the old policy of organized selfishness. We believe that, while we must deal summarily with the shiftless and the dissolute, letting each man understand that the world does not owe him a living unless he is willing to earn it, if one shows himself worthy it always pays to pay that man more than we bargain to pay him in the beginning. That's one feature. Another is that we mingle with our men, and let them feel that we're all workers together. At our reunions there's always a lecture included in the programme on some topic which will clearly explain these sophistries of communism. In other words, we treat our men like men, and not like things."

"Won't you be able to go away anywhere this summer?"

"After a while, perhaps. You must go, any way, and I will follow if I can."

"Where do you think we had better go?"

"Well, let me see. We might go to Saratoga if we could start together, but we shall be obliged, I think, to go to some other place nearer home. I met Mr. DeCamp this morning, and he said that his wife was going to Troy Hill. That would not be so very far away; you could reach there in a few hours, and you and she might be

company for one another. His financial troubles have evidently worn upon him greatly of late, though of course he did not say so. He said the doctor had told him to go away from business altogether; but declared that he could not think of such a thing at present, unless absolutely compelled to. He will go up occasionally, however, as he can make it convenient."

Katie did not feel like objecting to the suggested arrangement of Mr. Russell, but did not look forward to it with any degree of pleasure. Since the days when Mrs. DeCamp had smiled upon her and introduced Waldemar to her, a family misunderstanding had occurred between that woman's husband and the father of the young man, who had formerly been in business together. Laying aside the question as to the merits or demerits of the quarrel, Katie did not care to be compelled to associate with one whom she knew to be prejudiced against him she loved. She entertained very little admiration for Mrs. DeCamp even under the best circumstances. She reminded her of what Solomon says, that "like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion." But she made no objection to the plan, contenting herself with the suggestion that she need not necessarily be with her any more than she desired. So it was finally arranged that she should go to Troy Hill, and Mr. Russell should run up as often as he could.

There is no need of depicting the various characters whom Katie met there. They were just such as may be seen at any summer hotel. There was the young man with the span new suit and the rattan cane, who had been shut up behind the counter for fifty weeks, and

was now being wealthy for a fortnight; after which he would return to his tape measure and his economy once more, comforting himself meanwhile with the prospect of "having a reg'lar blowout next year." There was the conventional mamma, who was out prospecting for her daughters; and the patient clergyman who, with fishing-rod in hand, would sit all day by the banks of the neighboring stream, and then come home at night, bringing with him in triumph one bull-head and a sun-fish.

After they had been there about a week, Mrs. DeCamp burst into Katie's room one morning without even stopping to rap.

"My darling girl," she exclaimed, "excuse me, but last evening I had such a delightful conversation with a gentleman who arrived the day before yesterday, that I had to come and tell you about it the first thing this morning. Oh, he's just too lovely for anything!" lifting up both hands and wagging her head. "He's a foreigner, with bright flashing eyes and a perfectly magnificent moustache. He saw you as you were playing croquet on the lawn, and he just seemed in love with you. He asked all about you, and what do you think! He kept talking about you even after you had gone up to your room, and asked if you were engaged. Why, dear me, who knows but that we may have a wedding before the summer's out." And she laughed at the prospect of such a possibility, with the same glee with which a child welcomes from the garret an old toy which he has not seen for a long time. Clapping her hands, which had now become quite wrinkled, she exclaimed, "Oh, wouldn't that be just too funny for anything?"

Katie, who had a different opinion of the matter, did not seem as enthusiastic as Mrs. DeCamp had hoped and expected. For herself, she was sure that at her age (longer ago than she was willing to communicate) the tidings that a fine-looking gentleman had asked whether she was engaged would have been the very best news that she could have heard; especially as Katie was getting along into the twenties, and (as she thought) had no prospect of marriage. "But, then," she was accustomed to say to Mr. DeCamp, "Katie Russell is such a queer girl. I don't believe she'll ever catch a husband in the world; why, if I was her mother, I'd teach her to be on the lookout. How can anybody expect the young men to come around if nobody encourages them at all?"

As they entered the elevator to descend to breakfast, Katie's thoughts were engaged with topics very foreign to Mrs. DeCamp's *tête-à-tête* with the stranger. This was the day when a letter should arrive from Waldemar, and so she scarcely heard the chattering of her companion, who was still dwelling on the loveliness of the new-comer's moustache, and the distinguished appearance which he presented with his swarthy skin, his curling hair, and his flashing eyes.

When they entered the dining-room, Mrs. DeCamp looked eagerly about among the guests seated at the several tables to discover if he were among them. He was not, however, and so she unconsciously gave a few touches to her hair, and straightened out the little ribbon on her neck, that she might be as captivating as possible when he should enter. Of course there was no necessity for these little acts of scrupulous neatness, as everything

had been carefully pinned in its place when the curl-papers were removed; but the unconscious moment is the moment in which to discover the ruling passion. Then people will act themselves; like the soldier who had turned butler, but who, when he heard some one cry, "Attention, company!" dropped the platter and broke all the dishes while assuming position.

"There he is! There he is! Look at him, quick, quick!" Mrs. DeCamp whispered, excitedly, putting down on her plate again the piece of chop which she was just conveying to her mouth, in order to nudge Katie under the table.

When the young girl looked up, she saw a gentleman in the neighborhood of forty or forty-five, who came leisurely in, and seated himself at one of the tables. He was certainly a handsome man, dressed faultlessly, and with the air of a cosmopolitan who had seen everything there was to be seen, and had become somewhat *blasé*. As he caught the eye of Mrs. DeCamp he smiled courteously, while returning her bow. The rest of the day passed away, as usual at such places, in reading, strolling, etc., but they saw nothing more of the new guest until after the six o'clock dinner.

The two ladies had sauntered out on the porch, which was broad, and extended the whole length of the building. Soon they heard music in the parlor; the piece was one of Chopin's nocturnes. They sat down on a rustic seat near the window to listen.

"Whoever that is, he has good taste and understands expression," said Katie.

"Perfectly exquisite," replied the other. "Suppose we go in and see."

"We had better stay here; we can listen just as well, and see the sun set."

After a while the music died away, as though gradually receding into the distance, and ceased. The people who had been standing about the open doors of the parlor applauded, and requested the player to continue.

"Why, I do believe it's Signor Strabelli!" exclaimed Mrs. DeCamp, laying her hand on Katie's wrist. "That certainly sounded like his voice."

They listened, and heard him ask if there was anything else they would like him to play.

Some one suggested a selection from Mendelssohn. Once more the strains flowed forth on the quiet summer evening air, and for once Mrs. DeCamp's superlative was appropriately used. It was indeed "exquisite."

That lady was now filled with excitement. "Come, we will see the sun set some other time; let's go inside," she said, taking Katie's hand in hers and partly rising. The other, however, steadily refused, though why she should do so, when Signor Strabelli had asked on the very first evening he had seen her whether she was engaged, was more than Mrs. DeCamp could account for.

On the following Saturday Mr. DeCamp came up, utterly broken down, to remain for several weeks. The physician had at last peremptorily ordered it. It was impossible for his wife ever to dissemble, even if she wished to; whenever she attempted it, she was only like colored glass, through which one can easily see if he tries, and whose partial obscurity simply attracts all the more attention to itself. On this occasion, however, she did not make the effort. She was so constituted that whatever chanced to be uppermost in her mind generally

revealed itself to whomsoever her companion might be at the time, with the strictest injunction, however, even though it was to the butcher or the hair-dresser, that they should not speak of it under any circumstances.

Thus, her husband had not been with her long before he had learned all she knew about the stranger, and quite a number of things concerning which she did not know, but of which she felt assured that she was very good at guessing.

"He must be a count, I'm certain," she cried, enthusiastically, with the air of one to whom a real live count was by no means the insignificant creature John Bright would have us believe, when he says, "they have reached the temple of honor, not through the temple of merit, but simply through the sepulchre of their ancestors." So she clapped her wrinkled hands again, and exclaimed once more,—

"He must be a count; I know it. He looks just like a prince, and what do you think! He was talking to me yesterday about a beautiful villa that he owns in Italy just a little way out of Venice. Oh, Venice, Venice! Think of it: and he speaks about the canals and the city just as though he had lived there all his life. I believe he has, and that now he's travelling in disguise. Possibly he may be a refugee!" A refugee being to her poetic fancy a hero, without which no one of her novels would have been complete.

Mr. DeCamp listened to her discourse as he stood at the dressing-table in his shirt-sleeves, shaving. He was not accustomed to say much at any time in response to her ebullitions of romantic feeling, but his present occupation afforded him a better opportunity than usual of

remaining quiet. In the mean time he half made up his mind that this mysterious character might be some adventurer, or perhaps some foreign gentleman humorously inclined, who had detected the weak spot in his wife's character, and was having a little secret amusement at her expense. He scarcely knew, therefore, whether to be vexed or not at the revelation of his confidential chats with Mrs. DeCamp. So he kept on shaving, expressing no opinion whatever, but quietly determining to decide for himself when he should have the opportunity. As she continued with the report of his excellencies and dwelt upon his musical abilities, he about concluded that he was some harmless egotist, who had perhaps yielded to his imagination in seeking to make himself appear at his best.

"I've always noticed," he said, when she had finished, "that a male musician seldom amounts to very much else. He puts so much brain into his hands, that he hasn't much left for his head. Of course there are exceptions, and many of them; but then——"

At which she said, "Oh, George, I think you're real mean. There, now!"

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WHO IS HE?

WHAT had become of Mike through all these years? Like all the rest of the world, he had grown somewhat older; but though he had many lonely hours, life was to him now more often a psalm than a dirge; sometimes it seemed almost like a prelude for heaven. These were the days when Katie visited Sandy and Peggy and himself. They still lived in the same place; Sandy had grown too old for work, and so she never failed to come to them at least once a week, always leaving a little package of money behind, together with some delicacy for the old people, or other souvenir of her love.

"You're not forgotten, Peggy," she would say, "and you never shall be while I live."

Hans had gone to Germany some years before, but not until he had learned from his friend of the finding of the child. Mike felt his departure keenly, but comforted himself with the thought that if he had remained in this country he might perhaps unintentionally have divulged the secret of Katie's parentage. There was no possibility, he thought, of its being known now, and so he buried it in his own breast, and, spreading the soil over the past, he called it dead; but from that grave the flowers grew, and they filled his life with fragrance.

He still retained his position as night watchman at the bank. Once by his courage he had prevented a

robbery, and at another time had wrestled with an incendiary whom he caught in the very act of firing the building. As we have seen, he had an herculean frame, and it only needed one blow from his fist to strike the scoundrel senseless; so that he not only extinguished the flames, but succeeded in arresting the perpetrator. The man proved to be a member of a dangerous gang, and through him they were able to discover his accomplices, so that they were all either arrested or obliged to flee.

In such ways as these Mike had become very valuable to the officers of the bank, and was sometimes trusted to fill the place of the messengers in their absence. Though large amounts of money were thus committed to his care, he always executed his duty with a full sense of his responsibility, and returned promptly when the appointed errand had been performed.

One morning, while he was supplying the place of one of the men who chanced to be away for a week on his annual vacation, a gentleman came in to make inquiries in reference to a check which he wanted cashed. He was a foreigner, and spoke with a marked accent. He stated that he had just reached the city, and expected to leave the next afternoon; that the trunk containing his credentials had not yet arrived. He made some inquiries of the cashier, and then left, having promised to present himself on the following day at eleven o'clock.

When he had gone, Mike, who had overheard the conversation, started to follow him; then he returned and sat down in a chair in the back office. For a few moments he seemed bewildered; putting his hand to his head and leaning his elbow on the arm of the chair, he turned pale, and felt as though he were going to faint.

The bank was quite full at the time, and as every one was busy he was not noticed. Soon he arose, and going to Mr. DeCamp, who had not yet left the city for Troy Hill, he stated that he had suddenly become quite sick and would like to be excused for the day.

"All right," said that gentleman, after a moment's pause, during which he continued at his writing without looking up. He felt that he was being quite gracious. And so he was, according to his standard; if it had been any other employé, he would, before giving his consent, have questioned the propriety of his leaving, long enough at least to have made the impression on the individual that he felt he was endeavoring to secure a day's holiday on an idle plea. Even he, however, had come to appreciate in his way the services of Mike, and was accordingly more indulgent with him than he otherwise would have been. Nevertheless, the other left with a sort of vague sense that while he said it was all right, he meant in reality it was all wrong.

Leaving the bank, he hurried home to his little room, and lay stretched out on his bed for a long time. Finally he arose and began to pack up his clothing, laying most of it nicely away in his trunk, but stowing the most necessary articles in his satchel. Then he went in to Peggy and Sandy to tell them that he might be absent for some time, and to leave with them his rent for the landlord when he might call. Looking around the room carefully once more, he hurried back to the bank again, and presented himself before Mr. DeCamp.

"I think I must be lavin' ye, Mr. DeCamp," he said, holding his hat uneasily in his hands and gazing into it. The gentleman looked up in surprise.

"Why, what does this mean?" he asked.

It was his policy never to betray too much solicitude about his employés, thinking, with Napoleon, that men are always more attentive to duty when they are not exactly sure that they are giving satisfaction. "It makes them a little uneasy, and so more likely to be on the alert," he was accustomed to remark.

Now, however, he was taken off his guard, and manifested more interest than was his wont. Besides that, he began to realize, as there was a prospect of losing Mike, how difficult it would be to fill his place.

"Well, sir," said Mike, still looking into his hat, which he was causing to revolve between his fingers, "I don't loike to be lavin' ye, for you've been a good boss; but I been on here pretty steady now for a good many years, an' I think I'll have to be takin' a rest."

"How much rest will you need? Are you sick?"

"I don't feel very well, an' I want to travel about a little. I think I'd loike to be goin' into the country for a bit."

His employer vainly endeavored to persuade him to remain, and so at last reluctantly bade him good-by, telling him that if he ever needed employment to let him know, and if there was a vacancy in the bank which he could fill, he should have it. It may seem strange that a man like Mr. DeCamp, in spite of his declared principles, should have entered into such arrangements with a night watchman, when a single advertisement in the morning paper would have caused his doors to have been besieged with applicants. But while Mike was not very wise in many things, he had an instinct for the truth, and that is sometimes better than wisdom; or rather, it

is often the highest wisdom. Unlettered though he was, he had learned the lesson which seven-tenths of our young men never learn, and for the lack of that knowledge go halting through life: that he who would "get on" must ask every day, not first of all, "What can I get?" but, "What can I give?" that the first essential, in order that one shall come out at the top, is a willingness to go in at the bottom. Though his position had been a lowly one, he had made himself invaluable, capable of receiving any due reward, by not thinking so much of the reward as of the work.

The writer once heard of a literary society which took for its question of debate, "Resolved, that Mr. Longfellow's 'Excelsior' young man was a crank." If he had been present at that discussion he would most certainly have advocated the affirmative of the proposition. In his humble judgment he was a youth neither to be envied nor to be imitated. If his only aim was to "bear, 'mid snow and ice, the banner with the strange device, Excelsior," he might a great deal better have listened to the old man's voice which called him in out of the storm. So far as his own observation, and that of others with whom he has consulted, has extended, the men who have done the world's work have been thinking of something else than simply carrying their flag up higher. As a rule, they who have reached the top have been they who never expected to be found there at all. The difference is just the difference between Cæsar and Lincoln, between Napoleon and Garfield; the one crying "Conquest made me what I am, and conquest must keep me so," and so, while shouting "Excelsior," leading thousands to "the roaring torrent, deep and wide;" the other standing be-

fore a great nation and saying, "I would rather be right than be President." The young man was not half so worthy of renown as the hound who found him; for he had some business up the mountain "amid the snow and ice," and the young man had none.

Mike had never thought of getting to the top, but simply of doing just as well as he possibly could the duties of every day as they came. Now he discovered that even a hard master found him, in his sphere, well-nigh indispensable.

The next morning he took his satchel to the express-office, and left it there with instructions that they should keep it until he wrote to have it forwarded. Then he went and stationed himself in an open door-way, near the bank and across the street from it, where he could observe all who entered, without himself being seen. As he was known through the street as a bank watchman, he felt sure that no suspicion would be aroused even if the passers-by should discover him. He looked at his watch, and saw the hour was approaching which had been appointed for the stranger to call, and he felt himself becoming nervous and agitated; so he withdrew to the loft of the building, which was used for storage purposes, and where he would be less likely to be observed than before.

He had not been there a great while when he saw the gentleman leisurely approaching the entrance to the opposite building. Hastening down to the street, he waited for him to come out, which he shortly did, buttoning up his coat, in the pocket of which he had just placed the money he had received. Mike noticed that he hesitated a moment as though doubting in which direction to turn,

and then passed down the street leading to the railroad depot. He followed, keeping on the other side of the way that he might not attract attention to himself.

As they neared the station, there extended a broad esplanade in front, with a flagstone pavement leading up to the building. After Mike had seen him enter this walk, so that he knew whither he was going, he hurried through an intervening alley that led directly to the track; and by this means was enabled to enter the ticket-office from the other side, having escaped all observation from the stranger.

He had abundance of time to seat himself and to hide his face in the newspaper which he pretended to be reading before the other came in, wiping the perspiration off his forehead and fanning himself with his hat. He saw him step up to the ticket agent, and heard him ask when the next train would start for Sweetsville. The man told him, and handed him a time-table. Then he heard him inquire whether there was stage connection from there to Troy Hill. After receiving an answer in the affirmative, he stood with his eyes bent in thought for a few moments, twirling the time-table in one hand, and playing with his watch-chain in the other. Walking leisurely up the street again, Mike followed him to his hotel. He saw him step up to the counter, pay his bill, and heard him order his baggage to be sent to the four o'clock train. Then he sauntered up to his room, and the watchman departed.

"All roight," he muttered to himself on his way to his lodgings. "I'll keep my eye on ye, ye ould rascal!"

That afternoon he called for his satchel on his way to

the station, and as the cars swept into the depot, boarded one, and waited expectantly in the smoker for the coming of the stranger. The train stopped for refreshments at this point, so that he had his own choice of a seat, from which he could scan every passenger as he emerged from the door of the ticket-office. He watched eagerly till he discovered the object of his pursuit appear on the platform and walk toward the drawing-room car. Then he lit his clay pipe, and settled himself to wait as patiently as he might their arrival at Sweetsville.

Thus far all had gone well. If he had shown as much wisdom with Porta sixteen years before, he might have averted the desolation of his home. Every man grows older, however, even the man in the novel, except those miraculous creatures of the school of Mrs. DeCamp. His duties as watchman for so many years had made him more keen in dealing with characters whom he had reason to suspect of being vicious.

When they arrived at the station and alighted, he mounted to the top of the stage with the driver, thus once more escaping the notice of the stranger, who, with the rest of the passengers to Troy Mountain, rode inside; but when the horses stopped to water he determined to run the risk of being observed, thinking that the journey of an hour or more might perhaps enable him to overhear the gentleman's conversation, and help him to determine the best course to pursue when reaching their destination. He took pains to select a seat on the same side as that of the other, that he might thus avoid facing him.

They bowled on some time in silence, but as the day was warm and the journey a tedious one, the passengers

finally sought diversion in conversation, which soon became general. Mike noticed that the stranger was well informed, and before long was attracting almost sole attention to himself. He had travelled widely, and understood the art of expression, so that the others were very glad to remain comparatively quiet and enjoy the entertainment afforded by his varied fund of incidents and remarks. After a while the conversation became directed toward the place to which they journeyed. He had never been there, and began to question some one who had, in reference to the accommodations at the hotel, the different visitors, the opportunities for boating, shooting, and so forth.

Some one mentioned casually the names of Mrs. DeCamp and Miss Russell, and though he made no reply, Mike, watching him steadily from the corner where he sat, thought he noticed a quick glance at the speaker before he turned the conversation into another channel. One of the travellers especially appeared to be greatly attracted by the stranger, and inquired his name. Mike listened more eagerly than ever now, and caught the reply,—

"Strabelli,—Signor Strabelli."

This was the gentleman who on the following evening, while walking with his newly-made friend on the veranda, had been introduced by him to Mrs. DeCamp, apparently, and as that friend stated in speaking of it months afterward, by the merest chance. It is an old trick of the juggler to force a card on the spectator in the audience, thus making him an innocent confederate, while apparently leaving him, in his choice, entirely to the motions of his own will. Strabelli, who was deter-

mined to play his cards with a master-hand, used his newly-found admirer in the same way.

The reader knows the rest already: discovering almost at a glance the prevailing weakness of the lady, he captivated her at once by skilfully flattering her vanity, while at the same time whetting her interest and curiosity in him, by enveloping himself with a certain atmosphere of mystery and romance.

On the arrival of the coach, Mike, having concluded that the man he was watching would be safe at the hotel at least until the following day, went to find in the village some cheap quarters for the night, and where perhaps he might remain, while deciding what to do next. He took up his temporary abode at the little tavern, but before noon of the following day had secured board and lodgings in a farmer's dwelling almost directly across the road from the Troy Mountain House. Both houses stood back from the thoroughfare, so that there was considerable distance between them. This served his purpose the better, however, because, as his room was the second-story front chamber, he could readily observe whatever was taking place on the veranda of the hotel, without incurring the risk of being detected himself.

It was only a day or two after his arrival that Mr. DeCamp made his appearance; so that Mike's chief fear after this was lest he should be seen by him or Katie. Unless Mr. Russell should chance to stumble over him during his occasional visits, he knew he was safe from recognition by any one else.

To disarm the suspicion of the people with whom he boarded, he purchased a few books in the village, and intimated to them that he did not wish to be disturbed,

as he desired to pursue his studies unmolested. This of course was strictly true, only he did not designate the kind of studies he was pursuing. All day long he would sit at his window, watching for what he might discover from his retreat. On rainy days and in the evenings he would venture out, and sometimes also when he knew that Katie had driven off with Mr. and Mrs. DeCamp for an afternoon's ride.

It so happened that the son of the farmer with whom he lived was employed as bell-boy at the hotel. Occasionally he would come over to dine with his parents, and then Mike, as he sat at the table, would quietly listen while the lad poured into the ears of the simple people, whose whole stock of news was just that which they received during the summer boarding season from the house across the way, the gossip which a boy in such circumstances would be likely to convey.

If he had been quicker at reaching conclusions, he would have determined at once to make this boy an ally; but as it was, some time elapsed before he discovered that here might be the very aid he needed in accomplishing the purpose on which he had now fixed his whole heart. We have already found that when he had once directed his attention toward an end he was not easily diverted; and as the weeks passed by, this purpose developed into a passion, first to unravel a mystery which surrounded this stranger, and secondly, to hinder him in the crime which, for reasons best known to Mike himself, he felt sure he was contemplating. What that crime was he did not know, but the thought that he was bent upon some evil thing had ripened from a suspicion into a positive belief.

The business affairs of Mr. DeCamp had so worn upon his nervous system that much of the time he was compelled to remain in his room, so that Mike, from his tower of observation, saw very little of him. The boy, however, had much to say about the lady, his wife, frequently speaking of her in the highest terms which Young America could employ.

What man is there who, in the adolescent stage of his development, was at all susceptible, who cannot count among the objects of his early admiration some weakly demonstrative and sentimental lady old enough to be his mother? and how much more certainly did this admiration increase if she was accustomed to bestow peppermint lozenges upon him, with occasional lavish donations of a ten-cent piece?

As the boy was often rewarded in this way, after bringing water to her room or performing an errand, it was not remarkable that he should express his admiration for Mrs. DeCamp in the most vigorous English at his command. He frequently called her "a reg'lar spanker," and would often describe the way in which Signor Strabelli "buzzed" her, remarking at the same time that this Strabelli was "an airy old cock" whom he did not like.

These and similar terms shocked the old people somewhat, but Ned still persisted in employing them, and adding daily to his vocabulary whatever other phrases were used by the future Presidents of the United States who were employed in the same capacity as himself, and who were, most of them, "city boys."

One day, when he had been giving a particularly energetic account of how "the old rooster" had "clawed"

him for bringing up his shaving-water cold, closing his narrative with the expressed wish that he might "thump" him, Mike slipped a half-dollar into his hand as they went out into the hall together, and, cautioning him to say nothing about it, asked him to watch Strabelli, and report to him everything he saw. He told him that if he proved faithful and said nothing to anybody, he would give him twice as much again every week, but only on condition of the strictest secrecy.

Ned accepted the commission as gladly as he had the money, and that afternoon Signor Strabelli was watched as he had seldom been before. To avoid the suspicion of the old folks, Mike arranged to meet the lad after dark, under a certain tree in the neighborhood, and receive his report. Before long Ned was able to render the following:

"Every mornin' he orders a horse an' buggy, an' drives all by himself to Huntington; that's nearer than Sweetsville. Then when he comes back he generally goes up into his room an' stays a long time. In the afternoon he smokes or plays billiards with Mr. DeCamp or some other of the gen'lemen, or else sits on the veranda an' is soft to the ladies."

"What ladies especially?"

"He generally sits 'long side o' Mrs. DeCamp, but I've seen him a good many times with Miss Russell, though she don't seem to catch on to him much; at least not as much as the other one does."

"Will you look an' see what the postmark is on his letters?"

"He don't have no letters. I noticed that afore you spoke to me. I generally carry the mail up to the rooms

myself, an' he's the only one in the whole house almost that don't have none."

"How do you know he goes to Huntington when he drives away?"

"'Cause on rainy days he has a double carriage, an' the driver told me he always went there."

Mike scratched his head, and wished for the hundredth time that he had some one wise enough to tell him what he had better do. The weeks were passing, and he seemed no nearer the solution of the matter than he had been at the beginning.

"If it wasn't for bein' seen by Katie an' Mr. DeCamp," he thought, "I'd go over an' take rooms myself, an' thin perhaps I moight watch him to some purpose."

Finally an idea dawned upon him.

"Whin does he leave?" he asked.

"Every mornin' about ten o'clock."

"Strange I haven't seen him from my window."

"No; the carriage-door is at the side o' the house, an' the drive turns so that you would only see the carriage, without seein' who was in it."

"At ten o'clock?"

"Yes, about a quarter to ten."

It was arranged that Ned should come out, if he could, the next day on the veranda, and inform Mike of the exact time when Strabelli was ready to start by throwing a stone at the nearest tree.

Accordingly, the following morning, Mike had a horse and buggy in readiness, and the moment the signal was given he drove off in the direction of Huntington, slackening his speed somewhat in order that the other might readily overtake and pass him. Soon he heard the rattle

of wheels, and looking out from the little window in the back of the carriage, he saw the one whom he expected. After permitting him to pass he whipped up his horse, following on at a brisk trot, and Ned, watching them from the position which he had taken in the middle of the road, saw them both disappear amid a cloud of dust.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE MYSTERY OF A FEW LETTERS.

As Ned had predicted, Strabelli drove without stopping straight to Huntington. Mike drew up closer to him as they entered the town, lest by some mischance or unexpected turn in the road he might escape amid the crowd of vehicles. Eagerly he followed until he stopped at a large building, in front of which a number of farmers who had come to town had fastened their horses. When the man jumped out, Mike did likewise, and calling a boy to hold his beast, he thus gained time over the other, and entered the door of the store, while Strabelli was still engaged in fastening his horse to the wooden hitching-bar which ran along the curbstone the whole length of the building.

He was somewhat disappointed when it only proved to be the post-office; nevertheless, thinking of what Ned had told him, he watched the other closely, and had the satisfaction of hearing him ask for the letters in box 164.

"So he gits some letters after all," he whispered, "though in a sacret manner."

After receiving his mail, Strabelli drove straight back again, and Mike returned with a sense of chagrin to his own room. The next morning he did not wait for the other, but started at about nine o'clock to Huntington by himself. He reached there just as the mail was being distributed. Taking his position by the box, he could look through the glass and read the address of any letters which might be placed in it. "X. Y. Z., Box 164," he read, as the first letter was thrust into the little compartment.

"Sure an' it must be a very modest man that, if he isn't willin' to have his name sphelt on the outside of an envelope."

The next which entered the box gave him more surprise than the first, for he read the name of Miss Katie Russell.

"An' what can the letter of Miss Katie Russell be doin' in the box of Mr. X. Y. Z.?" he muttered.

Looking through the glass and carefully seeking to decipher the postmark, he found it impossible to read it.

"Sure it must be in Dutch. An' who from that country could be writin' to her in a foine, bould hand loike that?"

The postman now opened the sliding-window, thus signifying that he was ready to proceed to the business of distribution. Mike, to disarm suspicion, asked if there was a letter for him.

"Who are you?" inquired the man.

He looked round, and saw Strabelli just entering.

"Michael McGuiness," he answered.

"No, sir; none here for you."

On the way home the authorship of the letter still

occupied his attention, and he could not solve the mystery of how it should come into Strabelli's box. The fact that he was evidently receiving communications under cover confirmed the suspicion of his evil intentions.

That evening when Ned came to render his report, Mike ventured to ask more particularly about the relations of Katie to the Italian.

"They seem to be gettin' some thicker; but she don't act as lively as she used to act. Oh, I know," he added, "what old Browney does when he goes to Huntington. He goes there to get his letters. That's the reason he don't never get any when the rest o' the boarders does, when the stage comes from Sweetsville. I found it out by one o' the boys I was buzzin' to-day. He didn't think nothin', though."

"How did he know?"

"It don't seem it was any special secret. It seems he heard him say to Mrs. DeCamp and Miss Russell soon after he come that the mail reached Huntington several hours before the stage brought it from the other direction, and if they'd have their letters sent to that place, he would get them for them earlier, because he went over every day for his own letters."

Mike's countenance fell; after all his trouble, he had discovered nothing at all. Ned continued,—

"I guess the young lady don't get as many as she wants; she seems awful nervous, an' stands lookin' up the road off an' on a good while afore he gets back; an' when he tells her, as he did to-day, that there ain't none for her, she looks dreadful disappointed."

"Did he say there wasn't none for her?" exclaimed Mike, with excitement.

"Yes," said the boy, looking up wonderingly.

"To-day?"

"Yes."

"Ah, the villain! I see it all; I see it all."

The boy, who did not see it all, and, like most of his kind, possessed a thirst for knowledge of a certain sort, waited till Mike's passion had subsided, hoping to receive an explanation. As none came, however, he began to open the way by one or two questions. These called the other back to himself once more, and cautioned him to be on his guard.

"Go on," he said. "What else did ye see?"

"I remembered what you told me, an' I just kept my eye on both on 'em. He went up to his room, an' afore very long she went up to hern. When he come first she had her things on to go out ridin' with Mrs. DeCamp; but after that she told her that she didn't feel like goin', an' the horses was put back, an' they didn't go. Soon after, I went up into the next room to hern, an' peeked through the key-hole, an' there I saw the young lady lyin' on the bed on her face an' cryin' for all she was worth. I felt real sorry; it kind o' seemed as though old Browney had some'n to do with it, but I couldn't tell what, so I thought I'd just tell you about it as soon as I could."

If Mike had not been so greatly excited he would in all probability have reprimanded Ned for gaining information in such a disreputable but ancient manner. The discovery that Strabelli was evidently playing false with her, and the thought that his child was thus being subjected to torture, while it seemed impossible for him as yet to discern any sufficient motive, or to do anything to prevent it, almost drove him wild.

Quickly as he could he dismissed the lad, but instead of returning to his room he started up the road, walking briskly in another direction, occasionally stopping to throw himself under a tree, all the time engaged in the most earnest discussion as to what this new development might mean, and what would be the wisest course to pursue.

Thus he spent the whole night out of doors, walking, thinking, planning. Once he fell asleep for a few moments when he had cast himself down by the roadside to rest, but awoke with a start, dreaming that one man was torturing his child by crucifying her on a cross, while his companion was bending over him, and, with his fingers clutching at his throat, was preventing him from moving or even crying out.

"If I only had some one to tell me what to do!" he repeated to himself again and again.

By morning his determination was fixed. Watching his opportunity, he would secure a room at the hotel at such time as Katie and the DeCamps were in their own apartments, or out riding, and once having taken up his quarters there, he would endeavor at all hazards, and with the help of Ned, to watch Strabelli when he returned to his room, and discover if possible what he did, and from whom the letters were received. The next day he revealed his plan to the boy, who informed him that the room directly next to Strabelli's was vacant, and that if he should come that night, he might be able to secure it. That night, therefore, found him nicely domiciled in the very next apartment to that of the Italian.

Mike, in engaging the room, let it be understood at the office that he was not well, and would be seldom

able to leave it. Thus, without exciting suspicion, Ned could be summoned by the bell at all hours, and bring him constant information of what transpired.

The first night he examined his quarters carefully, and discovered above the door separating his apartment from Strabelli's a transom window. This door of course was securely locked, and the window itself had been carefully covered over on the other side with black cloth. He tried to look through, but found it impossible. The next day, during Strabelli's absence, he removed the pane of glass, taking care so to arrange it that it could be temporarily returned to its place when occasion required. After this he carefully cut in the cloth a figure shaped like the letter U. This would attract no attention, and by lifting it he would be enabled to see without himself being seen.

"I don't loike this koind o' business; but in dalin' wid such as you, I must foight fire wid fire," he muttered.

That very night he thought he heard a strange clicking sound in the next room. Looking in, he discovered Strabelli patiently at work with a type-writer, copying a letter which lay before him. After completing it, he spread it on the table, and proceeded to imitate, slowly and carefully, the signature. Then Mike saw him place it into an envelope which was already addressed. This envelope had evidently been opened after having been originally sealed; for Strabelli had to apply fresh mucilage before it would adhere.

With the information which he already had, it required no very great discernment for him to conclude that the man was probably printing for Katie a false letter and forging the signature of the real.

Early in the morning he rang for Ned, telling him to watch very carefully when Strabelli should return from the post-office that day, and report to him everything which should be said or done. Then he descended, and before the other boarders had finished their toilets he had partaken of his breakfast and was on his way to Huntington.

When the mail arrived, he stationed himself as before, where he might see each letter which was dropped into Box 164. There was one more for "X. Y. Z.," and another addressed to some one whose name he could scarcely decipher, but none for Katie.

The guests were at dinner when he returned to his hotel and ascended unobserved to his room. He rang for Ned to bring him his meal, and at the same time to render his report.

"Did he bring a letter to her to-day?"

"Yes; she wasn't able to leave her room to meet him as she generally done, so he gave it to one o' the boys to take up to her. When he had gone I offered to carry it up, and the boy let me have it. I knocked an' she come to the door, an' when she see that letter she just grabbed it, an' her hands shook like she had the ague. Then she shut the door again, an' I didn't see no more; but she hasn't come down to dinner, 'cause I watched for her."

"Has he come down?"

"Yes; him an' Mr. and Mrs. DeCamp sits at the same table. I tried to get a look into the dinin'-room, but the head-waiter drove me away. I just had time to see they was talkin' about something, but I don't know what they was sayin'."

Mike knew that Mr. DeCamp now had increasing

cause for anxiety. With the growing spirit of lawlessness in the city, the fires had multiplied so rapidly that under existing circumstances the insurance companies had refused, until they could come together, to insure works located on the "flats," situated, as they were, in the midst of lumber-yards, paint-manufactories, and warehouses denominated bad risks, even in the best times. This much he could guess as being one of the causes of his former employer's physical prostration, for this was generally known; but this was only one reason for Mr. DeCamp's mental depression and growing nervousness.

His present resources were not what they once were, having been seriously diminished by several long strikes, resulting from misunderstandings with his workmen. The responsibilities for these losses he laid entirely upon the shoulders of his employés, and he had therefore become more harsh and exacting than before. He knew that if a fire should take place, it might mean for him utter ruin; and the constant solicitude had so worn upon his nerves that he was no longer the calm, cool man which he had been beforetime. This was evident to all in the haste with which he ate his food, his startled appearance when suddenly addressed, his dislike to being left alone, and his long, silent broodings when in company.

He was just in the frame of mind to yield to the influence of such a man as Strabelli; especially as Mrs. DeCamp, who had become infatuated with the latter gentleman, took every occasion to bring them together.

"Do you sit where you can see the annunciator?" Mike asked presently of Ned.

"Yes; me and the other boys all sits on the bench near the office, an' the annunciator's just above our head in front of our eyes."

"Watch, thin; an' every toime Miss Russell rings her bell, you go. Kape your eyes open, an' let me know what you can."

"If I could only warn her, poor choild," he said to himself when he was left alone. "But what would be the word of a poor Irishman loike me whin compared wid that of a gintleman loike him? But I'll kape my eyes on him, an' if he goes to hurt a hair of her head——" He clinched his fists and walked excitedly across the room.

That evening he heard a knock at his door, and on opening it discovered Ned. The boy looked mysteriously up and down the hall, to see that no one was in sight, and then entered, and closed the door.

"Here's a letter that she just give to me to mail," he said, in a whisper. "You told me to bring everything to you, and I didn't know but that this might help you to git behind that foreign chap." Though the boy scarcely knew how or why, he had concluded there must be some connection between Katie and Strabelli of which Mike did not approve.

He hesitated to take the letter, even to look at the outside; it seemed like disloyalty to his sense of honor. It was the first time in his life he had been called to occupy even a questionable position.

"It's for her own good, though; bless her schwate soul," he said to himself as he conquered his reluctance and looked at the directions on the envelope. He read:

"Mr. Waldemar Grant,
"Mannheim,
"Germany."

Here it was at last. It dawned upon him now. How stupid of him not to have thought of Waldemar before! He now remembered having seen them riding together, months ago, in Groveland. He was the one, then, whose letters Strabelli was appropriating and whose name he was forging. Now the way was clear before him. He would sit down and write to him at once, and tell him what he had seen.

This he accordingly did; and having taken an assumed name at the hotel, through fear that his real one might be recognized by those whom he did not care should know of his presence, he signed this name to the letter and sent it off by the next mail. He took the further precaution to have the answer directed to a box which he secured at Huntington.

That night, however, he was considerably perplexed. He lay awake many hours trying to discover how Strabelli, during the weeks in which he had been carrying on this plan, could have evaded detection. Surely Waldemar Grant should have perceived the fraud by reading Katie's replies.

He had become considerably acquainted with the elder Mr. Grant at the time that gentleman was in partnership with Mr. DeCamp. He remembered meeting Waldemar in his father's office not long before he had left for Germany; and the more he thought of it, the more convinced he was that the place where he was intending at that time to go was not one which had the sound of

Mannheim, though what it was he could not recollect. He determined on the following day to return to Grovetown, where he could very easily find out from the former coachman of the Grants, with whom he was well acquainted.

"It won't do no harm to write to both places," he said, when he had discovered the real name of Waldemar's supposed residence. Accordingly he sent another letter to Heidelberg, similar to the one he had written a few days before.

In less than a fortnight he received a despatch :

"Am coming. Watch him. Will reward you well.
(Signed) "WALDEMAR GRANT.'

Mike was deeply hurt at the last sentence, but consoled himself with the thought that Waldemar did not know him. He had little time to think about himself, however, on account of the exciting events which shortly followed, the story of which we must reserve for the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### IN WHICH MIKE MEETS SOME ONE, AND IS GREATLY SURPRISED.

AFTER he had received the despatch from Waldemar, Mike determined to see Katie if possible, and, now that he had some definite information, to warn her against Strabelli, and bid her wait patiently till Waldemar should return. He scarcely knew how to secure an

interview without being discovered, and, concluding that the danger would be diminished if he were farther removed from the hotel, decided to return to his old quarters at the farm-house.

He hesitated whether to send a message requesting her to appoint a place of meeting, or to wait till such time as she should drive to one of the neighboring villages, then to follow her and secure a word while Mrs. DeCamp, who usually accompanied her, was in some store making a purchase.

He finally chose this latter plan, and accordingly arranged with Ned to let him know whenever she might be ready to go out.

In vain, however, he waited for the signal. What had become of Katie during all this time? Let us see.

Even though one may be well aware of the weakness of another, if they are almost constantly in their company they cannot help being more or less influenced. Katie understood thoroughly the frivolity of Mrs. DeCamp, and had made up her mind not to be infected. Strabelli, on the other hand, was too shrewd not to use this woman as an ally if he could. Accordingly, with the knowledge which he had already received from the letters intercepted, he adroitly led her to surmise (apparently solely through her own penetration) the relations existing between Waldemar and Katie.

The way was very open for him to do this, by questioning her as to whom the young lady's correspondent could be who wrote to her so regularly from Germany.

This of course set Mrs. DeCamp to guessing within herself; and since her antipathy to the head of the house-

hold had extended, as it generally does with such people, to all the members of the family, she took every occasion to draw comparisons between Signor Strabelli and her nephew, not at all favorable to the latter.

At first Katie had resented these suggestions with considerable warmth, but when Waldemar's letters had suddenly become so much colder toward herself, until each one seemed more indifferent than the last, she was forced to think that she had been perhaps mistaken concerning him; and though the discovery almost broke her heart, she began secretly to welcome the strictures of Mrs. DeCamp, as a kind of palliative for her wretchedness.

"Waldemar is only a boy," that lady remarked on one of these occasions, when she was discussing the merits of the Italian and the demerits of his rival. "Now, if I were a young girl, I'd rather have a strong man, whom I could look up to: a man who has seen the world, and knows what is in it. Just think how exquisitely Signor Strabelli plays the piano, and what a distinguished air he has when he walks into the parlor. Why, goodness gracious, he looks for all the world like one of the doges of Venice!"

Katie was not ready to say in how far the ability to play the piano and to walk with an imposing air went toward the making of an acceptable partner for life; she only knew that she was very miserable, and longed for almost anything which might afford her diversion and cause her to forget her grief.

The first succession of blows had prostrated her, and she lay sick and moaning to herself in her own room for several days. This had annoyed Strabelli. He had no idea that she would take the matter so much to heart.

It threatened to overthrow his plans altogether, by cutting off all opportunity for him to meet her. So he determined, through Mrs. DeCamp, to appeal to that weak point in most people under the sting of unrequited love: her pride.

Of course the vain, giddy woman whom he used as his tool never suspected that she was playing the part of a puppet in the hands of this man. She giggled and chuckled to herself, complimenting her own shrewdness, acting on every subtle suggestion of his, and never supposing it to be a suggestion at all; taking her pay, meanwhile, in that scrip with which so many debts are liquidated among fools,—smiles and cajolery; a capital which, however valuable it may appear at the time, fails to supply the place of hard cash, when the owner chances to feel the need of some circulating medium which shall pass current at the bake-shop or the grocery. Egged on by these unrecognized promptings, she visited the room of Katie daily, and urged her not to give way to the disappointment which had so suddenly fallen on her.

"It's really humiliating, my dear," she exclaimed, seating herself in a chair by the side of the bed on which the young girl lay, and throwing up her hands, "that you should go on so, simply because some young man has shown that he isn't worthy of you. To be sure, I don't know; I can only guess; but all the boarders in the house will soon begin to talk about it. Of course they saw you when you refused to go out riding the other day because no letter came from him. I was really sorry myself that you showed it so plainly."

The truth was that she had never suspected the cause at all until it had been suggested by Strabelli.

"The real fact is, you are too good a girl to carry on so. Waldemar isn't worthy of it. Necessarily, if the boarders come to suspect it (and how can anybody help it?) they will only make you a laughing-stock, and say that you were jilted, and he will hear of it; perhaps somebody has written to him already, and he is amusing himself about it even now."

"He isn't!" cried Katie, her eyes flashing as she lifted herself on her elbow. "And what do I care what people think? I wish I were dead, I do!" And she buried her face in her hands and began to sob hysterically, partly through anger, but chiefly through her sense of loneliness and grief.

"Well, I hope not," said the other; "but I know Waldemar better than you do. It must be Waldemar, because I saw the post-mark was in German; and, moreover, I recognized his handwriting on one of the envelopes. But then I don't want to hurt your feelings, my dear; only I can't help wishing you had more pride."

"I wish mother was here," sobbed Katie, as she thought of Mrs. Russell, when the door had closed on Mrs. DeCamp and a fresh realization of her loneliness came over her.

Nevertheless Mrs. DeCamp's words had their effect.

"Perhaps it is foolish for me, and weak," she thought, the next day, "to give way to this trouble. Not that I care for what people will say; but I want to be a woman, and not a child. But then he seemed to me to be so true and good. I can't understand it! I can't understand it!" And she stood looking out on the drizzling rain through the window, her arm against the sash and her head leaning against her arm.

So at last she forced herself to leave her room and mingle as much as possible with the others in the house, as though nothing had happened.

Mike, from his retreat, saw her every time she appeared on the veranda; still the days passed by without the signal being given.

"Suppose we all take a little walk," said Mrs. DeCamp, as she and her husband were seated, with Signor Strabelli and Katie, one evening at one of the tables on the lawn.

The Italian quickly threw away his cigar, and offering Katie his arm, the party strolled down the road. Mike, who was sitting under the shadow of a great tree opposite, saw them, and followed at a distance.

Never in his life did he feel the need of greater self-control than then. Knowing much and suspecting more in reference to the designs of this man, he could have snatched the girl from him and trampled him under foot. But he asked himself, what would be the result? He had absolutely no proof at all, and could have none till Waldemar returned. At the very time when the interests of all demanded his vigilance, he should be arrested for assault; and Strabelli, if not exalted to the position of a hero by that tendency in human nature leading us to sympathize with whichever party is attacked, would at least have warning that he was being watched.

Mike knew that if he could only control himself until the evidence was at hand, he might convict him of a State's prison offence; inasmuch as he had not only robbed the mails, but had committed forgery besides. With a strong effort he restrained himself until the party had returned to the hotel; but the sight of these

two together led him to form the determination to warn Katie at the earliest possible moment against the man whom he thus knew to be a villain. But how should he do it? He could not see her personally; though he had once intended to, the more he thought of it the more impracticable it seemed. She would be sure to ask questions, which he was not, at present at least, prepared to answer. Should he write a letter? But what weight was there in a note which came anonymously?

The excitement of the evening, and the anxiety in reference to his child, kept him from sleep that night. The truth was, though he was not prepared to acknowledge it to himself, that he was beginning seriously to feel the result of his constant watching and his long hours of solicitude. Some of the old symptoms, such as the pain in his head, began to make their appearance once more. That indefinite foreboding which is so apt to accompany approaching insanity would creep over him, so that many times when he fell at last into a troubled slumber it would be far toward the morning.

This was a clear night in the early part of September. Finding he could not sleep, he arose, as he frequently did, to walk the room. A strong wind had arisen, and he went to the window for the purpose of closing it. The house was so situated that it faced the north, and this window opened toward the west, in the direction of Groveland. Immediately his attention was attracted by a lurid glare against the sky.

"Sure it must be a house afire," he said to himself.

As it increased in volume he drew on his clothes, and hurried down the road to where he imagined it might be. He thought it strange that no cry of fire was raised,

and that he saw no one running in the same direction. Presently he overtook a man who, like himself, had seen the light, and had come out to discover the cause.

"It must be just beyond the hill yonder," said he, when he saw Mike.

"People seem to be takin' it moighty cool," responded the latter, as they hurried on.

When they came to the top of the hill it was as far off as ever.

"Sure it's a big fire wherever it is," said Mike.

The heavens were now brilliant with the light of the flame. The two reached the top of the next hill, and it was apparently as distant as before. Suddenly the man with him turned round and exclaimed,—

"It's the city!"

Mike only needed the suggestion to realize its truth. It was the city. How much of the city they knew not; but it looked as though the whole town was burning up. The flames, which seemed so near, were fifteen miles away. The long-threatened conflagration had come, and to-morrow should see families who had been accustomed to wealth all their lives reduced to beggary.

When he returned to the hotel he found everything in a state of excitement. Standing where he could see, without being recognized, he heard Mr. DeCamp calling for horses, and near him stood Strabelli, stroking his moustache and looking at the lurid skies. When the horses arrived, Mike was dismayed to see them enter the carriage together and dash off toward town.

"Sure ye'll not get away from me so easily as that," he whispered, as they disappeared down the road.

The stage was crowded the next morning when it

started for Sweetsville, there to meet the train for Groveland. Mike did not seek to enter it at the hotel, but walked along the road that it should overtake him, thus avoiding recognition in case Katie chanced to be among the crowd on the porch. Climbing up to a place with the driver, he was soon rolling rapidly along toward the city and the object of his search. He regretted that he could not have devised some way to warn Katie before he left; but he consoled himself with the thought that Strabelli would not be there for a day at least. "Possibly never," he muttered; "if young Mr. Grant only comes in time to fix him."

Having reached the town, all day long he wandered about the streets, trying to find some clue to his whereabouts.

"I'll watch the house at night, an' see if he comes in thin."

That night he was rewarded by discovering Strabelli and Mr. DeCamp drive up to the family mansion and go in together. "I don't have as good a chance to kape my eye on ye here as I did in the country," he muttered; "but you'll be a wiser chap than I think ye are if ye git out o' my sight for long."

There was but one depot in the city, and Mike knew that if the man should attempt to leave town he would almost certainly go from there; especially as he felt confident that as yet he had received no hint that he was being watched. So during the day he stood guard near the station, where he could see every one who went into or came out of it; and at night he placed himself, at such time as he knew no train left the city, near the house of Mr. DeCamp.

The second evening he was as successful as the first; for though he did not see them when they entered, he discovered them sitting in the library together; and afterward, when they came out, and talked for a long time on the balcony.

He noticed that while Strabelli appeared perfectly self-possessed, DeCamp smoked quick and nervously, using up almost two cigars while the other was disposing of one.

The next day there awaited him a genuine surprise. While he stood watching the passengers who had arrived from the East by the St. Louis express, he could hardly believe his eyes when among them he discovered Waldemar.

Hurrying toward him, he greeted him fervently. The young man, who was not aware that his communicator was Mike, on account of the false name which the latter had signed, was somewhat astonished at his demonstrations, especially as he had known him only slightly before leaving for Germany. He was, moreover, exceedingly desirous not to be recognized, that he might the better be able to pursue a still hunt after Strabelli.

"It's moighty glad I am to see ye," exclaimed Mike, grasping his hand with a sense of relief; feeling that here at last was some one with whom he might safely counsel.

"How do you do?" replied the other coldly, as he turned away. But Mike was too much excited to notice the manner in which his approaches were received.

"Let me carry your satchel," he persisted.

"Thanks; but I shall order a hack."

"Ah, well, that'll be better, an' we'll ride up together, so we will."

The other looked at him again with a sort of an amused astonishment, but said nothing. When the hack was ordered, Mike attempted to enter after Waldemar.

"See here, Mike, or whatever your name is, it seems to me you're deuced impertinent!" exclaimed the other, now almost provoked by what he deemed a stranger's assurance.

Mike looked up with a surprised expression; the color flushed his face, but he drew back quietly.

"All roight, Mr. Grant," he said, in a subdued tone. "Sure I won't trouble ye. But I only thought I moight be doin' ye a good turn."

Waldemar scarcely knew what to make of this expression; the conscious dignity of the man, and the pained look in his face, appealed to his sympathy. With a generous impulsiveness which was one of his chief characteristics, he said, as he threw open the door again,—

"Come in; come in; I didn't mean to hurt your feelings; only if you wasn't an Irishman I'd say you ought to have been born down East, judging by the calm use you know how to make of other people's nutmegs. Come in; where do you want to go?"

But Mike still stood outside; for with all his humility he had self-respect, which would not brook injustice, where he thought it was intended.

"It don't make any matter about me ridin', Mr. Grant," he said. "I can just as well walk, for I'm used to it; only I thought it moight be best for us to have a talk about him together just as soon as we could. It's a slippery man that we're dalin' with."

"Who?" exclaimed Waldemar, with astonishment.

Mike began to think there must be some mistake.

"Isn't your name Mr. Waldemar Grant?"

"That's my name; and yours is—— What is yours, any way? Barney, isn't it?"

"Yes, my name is Michael Barney." Then, remembering himself, he added quickly, "but the name you're to know me by is Michael McGuiness. Whist now, don't say a word!" And he put his finger over his lips in token that the other was to be discreet, as he noticed his sudden look of recognition, and fancied he was about to speak. He was not quick enough, however, to prevent the hasty Waldemar from exclaiming, while he thrust his hand out to him,—

"And you are the man who is to help me track that villain to earth! How fortunate we should have met! Come in! come in! Did you get my despatch?"

Mike glanced uneasily around, for he could not help noticing the driver who had been standing near his horses, and within hearing distance, waiting for orders as to their destination. He stepped in, and Waldemar, thrusting his head out of the window, cried,—

"Take me to the Buckingham—— But no! Wait." He drew back again and consulted with Mike. "Take me to 52 Riverton Street." And the carriage rolled away toward Mike's home. "So it was you who wrote the letter, was it?" said Waldemar. "How in the world did you come to know of it?"

"Well, I had reasons for suspectin' him that I can't spake of now. I found he was goin' there, an' I thought I'd go off on a little vacation. A bit o' fun now an' thin don't hurt no man, ye know. I'd been workin' pretty steady on an' off at the bank for a good while.

So says I to myself, I'll just kape my eye on him, for the reason that I guessed he was a rogue. So I kept my eye on him for a bit of diversion loike, and that's how it was."

Once more Mike's instinct had proved wiser than his reason. He felt that Waldemar would naturally ask for some cause why he had assumed the part of a detective; and lest he might by any chance guess the real one, he sought to convey the impression that it was for the excitement of tracking a rogue.

"Well, you shall be rewarded if you help me in this matter."

With the same quiet dignity which he had manifested before, all the more impressive because he was so unconscious of it himself, Mike replied,—

"I don't want any reward, Mr. Grant. I never axes any reward for doin' me duty. Sure I couldn't see an innocent young guirl loike Miss Russell, whom I've chanced to know now for this many a year, an' a foine young man loike yerself, wronged without feelin' that I was wronged too. It made me feel awful bad when I read in your despatch that you was goin' to reward me; but I said to myself that perhaps whin ye came to know me better ye wouldn't be thinkin' that I wanted any reward for doin' a good turn to the loikes o' you an' her."

The young man looked at him and thought, "Really!" Then he shifted his seat with the air of one who had unexpectedly discovered himself in the presence of a gentleman. "I won't, of course, insist upon it," he said, "if you don't want to take it; I only wished you to know that I appreciated your, your—kindness," hesitating for the right word.

"That's all roight," said Mike, anxious to enter on the main question. "Now let's talk about the man we're after. We'll have to work moighty cautious loike; for he's that sly that I belave he's loike a fox, an' can smell what he can't see wid his eyes."

"Where is he now?"

"Sure he's here in the city, at the house of Mr. DeCamp. I——"

"At the house of Mr. DeCamp? I thought so. When I heard from you that they two were together, I knew that he and his wife (who is unfortunately my aunt) had been influencing Katie against me, and so playing into the hands of this rascal. Not that they realized, of course, that he was a rascal," he added, "but they have not been any too well disposed toward our family since a certain disagreement between us in business matters some years ago."

"From what I see in the papers," said Mike, "he hasn't got anything left now. They say his house is in his wife's name; but the fire comin' just at the time whin the companies had refused to insure has made all his property go up in smoke. Sure the whole place was cleaned out, leavin' scarcely a chimney standin'. He had a little property in real estate, but the creditors has come down on him for that, an' I hear tell how he's clean gone by the board."

"Poor fellow!" said Waldemar, thoughtfully. "If I'd known that I wouldn't have written him the letter I did. I'm always making blunders through my impetuosity. When I received your note telling me of the machinations of this rascal, and of how he appeared to be so intimate with Mr. and Mrs: DeCamp, I was crazy

with rage. I didn't discriminate as I ought to have done. I might have known that they would not do anything dishonorable; but feeling desolate as I did at having received such letters from Miss Russell,—to whom, I might as well say to you, I've been engaged for some time, though I didn't think that any one else knew it,—I sat down and wrote, accusing them of using their influence to prejudice her against me. Of course I didn't say anything about this Strabelli, because that would have betrayed matters; but I knew they must know that the engagement was broken off. At any rate, it seemed to me in my moment of anger as if they were trying to break it off, and I wrote all kinds of threats, which I didn't mean, and which I wish now I hadn't written. I don't suppose they've got the letter yet; for it couldn't come any quicker than I did, and I started right away."

By this time they had arrived at Mike's door, and having paid the driver, ascended to his room.

Waldemar unpacked his satchel, and by his friend's solicitation began to make himself at home. He had not gone to his own house for two reasons. The first of these was, that his father and mother had not yet returned from the country, where they were visiting a relative; and the second, that until he had captured Strabelli he did not want the servants in the house to know of his return, on account of the publicity which they might give to it.

He had been secretly contemplating the possibility of returning to America even before receiving Mike's letter. His father had a few months before become suddenly a poor man by the depreciation of values in Western lands;

and Waldemar had felt that, however loath he might be to give up his studies, he ought not to continue them, since the resources at home had so far diminished that the expense would prove a burden. He had lost much interest in his pursuits, moreover, on account of this disappointment in connection with Katie. Strabelli had cunningly conveyed the impression, in the letters he had sent to Waldemar, signed with her name, that while she did not state the fact, she felt that the altered circumstances in his father's family precluded the possibility of her continuing the engagement.

The shock was a terrible one to a young man of his disposition. He had placed as much reliance in her nobility of character as she had in his. For the time he became misanthropic, and lost sympathy with everything about him. Woe to the man who has cause, or feels he has, to lose confidence in man or woman! It were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.

When Mike's letter had arrived, the revulsion of feeling was so great that he could not stay a single day, but started in the very next vessel for home, without communicating with any one except his correspondent.

For a time he sat looking over the morning papers, and eagerly asking questions about Katie, Strabelli, Mr. and Mrs. DeCamp, and various others whom he knew, and the events which had happened in his absence. Mike replied mostly in monosyllables, sitting on a chest, looking out of the window, and engaged in thought. Finally he turned to Waldemar, and in a slow, hesitating way he said,—

"I know it's none o' my business, an' yet I suppose

we must speak o' these things plain loike if we're goin' to catch him; but did you say whin we was comin' up in the carriage that you received letters as though they come from Katie—I beg pardon, Miss Russell—sayin' as how she wanted to break off the engagement?"

"Yes."

"An' how was they written?"

"With a type-writer, and signed with her name. That was because, according to these letters, her eyes were getting poor, so that she found it easier to write in that way. I wish I had them now, but unfortunately, in my anger and grief, I burned them."

"An' I saw him writin' a letter, which I found out afterward was to her, an signin' it wid your name in the same way."

"The rascal!" And Waldemar arose and walked the floor. "But why did I not receive her letters?" he exclaimed. "Are you sure you're not mistaken? If these I've been receiving have been written by him, what has become of hers?" And he stopped inquiringly in the midst of his walk and looked at Mike.

"An' I been thinkin' o' that, too. Sure it seemed moighty strange, so it did; but after layin' awake the whole of a night, I thought I struck it, though I don't know that I did for a fact. Where was your address, Mr. Grant?"

"Why, where you wrote to me, to be sure: Heidelberg, Germany."

"It's it, begorra!" And Mike permitted the palm of his hand slowly and emphatically to descend on his knee.

"Of course it's it; I haven't been anywhere else since I reached there."

But Waldemar had not understood the force of the last expression. Mike referred to his suspicions concerning Strabelli.

"Ye see this Italian," lifting one finger and speaking deliberately, as though trying to collect his thoughts, "says to Katie—I beg pardon, Miss Russell—one mornin', 'If you want to get your letters soon, have 'em sent to my box at Huntington.' That's the way he gets your letters to her in his own hands; an' thin writes others to her, pretendin' they come from you."

"But how did he keep me from receiving hers? They did not come to me through him."

"Be aisy," said the other, lifting his hand and inclining his head as one who is pretty sure of his ground, provided you give him time enough to explain. "You was never in a place called Mannheim?"

"No; except when I went through on my way to Heidelberg. It's a little town not far from there."

"You never tould any letters to be directed to you there?"

"Never."

Mike then related the circumstances of Katie's envelope, addressed to Waldemar, being brought to him, directed to that place.

"I see it," said the other. "He in a forged letter, purporting to come from me, written with a type-writer, so as to make the forgery easier, must have told Miss Russell to send her letters there."

"But how did he get 'em back again?" queried Mike, who had already solved the problem for himself as far as this.

"Easily enough; he simply had to write to the author-

ities there requesting that letters arriving to such a person be forwarded to Huntington; possibly enclosing money for postage, though I don't know exactly what the law is in reference to that."

"Sure he must be the son o' the devil himself," whispered Mike, slowly shaking his head from side to side, as the truth dawned upon him.

"Then he had her letters and mine in his own hands, and could keep up a false correspondence between us at his will."

Mike looked down on the carpet and nodded his head solemnly, but said nothing.

"Now to-morrow," continued Waldemar, "I will go out to Troy Mountain and explain these matters to Miss Russell. That's the first thing which must be done. You stay here and watch him that he does not get away; and before long we'll have the handcuffs on his wrists, and he himself where he won't do much damage, for a while at least. I'll come back the next day; then we'll go to work in dead earnest."

Mike sat, when he had finished, scratching his head, as he was accustomed to do when perplexed. Presently he said, still deliberating,—

"There's one thing which I can't explain. How long did he expect this game to last? Sure he must ha' been an idiot, wid all his slyness, not to know he'd be found out."

"Why, that's easily explained. I frequently spoke in my letters of my contemplated stay for two years longer in Germany. From those same letters he must have known that our engagement was secret. If he could succeed in alienating us, there wouldn't be much chance

of his discovery, for a while at least, with her in this country and me in Germany. The only reason that I can give for his running such a risk and taking so much pains is, that he wanted to marry her himself."

"I don't know," said Mike. "He's a deep one! He's a deep one!"

"And when one comes to think of it," continued the other, "the idea of any such motive is absurd on its face. He must have commenced this just as soon as he went to the Mountain House, where she was. She certainly never could have seen him before, or I should have known it. And it's ridiculous to think of a man of his character falling so desperately in love, in a single day, with a young lady who is not at all congenial with him, that he is willing to run such a risk as that."

Mike had nothing to offer toward the solution of this problem, so he only shook his head, and again showed his superiority in point of wisdom to many whom we meet by saying nothing when he had nothing to say.

It was now growing toward evening. Looking at his timepiece, he remarked,—

"It's most time for him and Mr. DeCamp to be comin' home. I must go out an' watch."

"And I'll go with you," Waldemar answered, rising and taking up his hat.

"You're not afraid o' bein' seen?" asked the other, anxiously.

"Oh, no. Nobody knows I'm in town, you know. But look here; if you have an old coat, it might not be amiss for me to put one on."

Mike brought one out for him, and he got into it, laughing at its huge proportions.

"This is the biggest pod for such a small pea I've seen for a good while," he remarked. "Now if you've got an old slouch hat, that'll make matters complete." And he laughed again as he drew the coat up over his nose and peered out from above its collar. Mike brought out one of his old hats, and stuffed paper into the lining to make it fit. They both laughed heartily as Waldemar took it, and, putting it on, assumed various postures before the glass.

"Sure ye'll be arrested by the police, so ye will," cried Mike, the old-time twinkle showing in his eye.

"No, they won't touch me in such a rig as this. They'll think I'm a Plug Ugly, and let me pass as one of themselves out of uniform. I'd be almost willing to be arrested, though, for the sake of seeing how they do it. I never knew a policeman yet who could catch anything; not even the measles if it was in his own neighborhood."

They went out, and walked on in silence. At last they came to a side street leading into the principal thoroughfare.

"Stand back, Mr. Grant," Mike whispered suddenly. "He's comin'."

They withdrew under the shadow of a great tree, and saw Mr. DeCamp and Strabelli pass up the avenue, arm in arm. They were not walking fast, so the two men could easily follow them.

Mr. DeCamp appeared to be listening, while the other was talking rapidly and with earnestness, though in an undertone. They had passed so close to Mike and Waldemar that they could have touched them.

"Could you hear anything he said?" asked Mike.

"I thought I heard him say that there could be no danger in it, and it was his only hope."

"So did I."

Then after a pause, "Sure there must be trouble brewin'."

"We will watch to-night and see."

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## CHAPTER XX.

### TOO LATE!

MR. DECAMP was a shattered man. Gold had been his god, and his god had cast him off. The blow, coming as it did at the very time when he was tottering from nervous exhaustion, had levelled him to the earth; and stretching forth a palsied hand, he was ready to accept the aid of any one who might be strong enough to lift him up.

"Put your money into your head," said Benjamin Franklin, "and no one can steal it." And a greater than he has asked, "What shall it profit a man if he gain a whole world full of *things* and lose *himself*?"

Mr. DeCamp had heeded neither the one nor the other. While enjoying time and opportunity, he had never cultivated those intellectual tastes which have made thousands of poor men rich, surrounded only by the favorite authors whom they have learned to love; neither had he ever bowed in sincerity and truth at the feet of Him without whom all our life must be incomplete, and

learned the infinite difference between simply having good and being good. He had never learned to use this world without abusing it; to put the earth where God intended it should be put, beneath our feet. He had lifted it above his head, and bowed before it as before a Moloch, and it had crushed him.

Had he, with reverent spirit, ever sought to solve the real problem of his being; had he made his life's purpose not, What shall I have? but, What shall I be? had his aim been first for character, and then for possession, he would not have been so utterly forsaken now.

He was a man who had sought for, and gained, "the world;" and in the mean time had been losing "himself." The noblest part of his nature, that which was intended to make him Godlike, had been crushed out between bricks and mortar; the man had been exchanged for blocks of houses, and bonds and railroad stock. Now, when these were removed, the dwarfed pigmy of a soul had not the strength to stand alone. It had to lean on something; sooner or later, so must we all. It had cultivated neither faith in God nor itself; Strabelli was at hand, and it leaned on him.

After Waldemar and Mike had stood outside the stately mansion for a considerable time, they saw a light appear in the library, and through the large plate-glass window they could discover the two gentlemen as they took their seats on either side of the centre-table and began to smoke. Occasionally Mr. DeCamp would rise from his chair and pace the floor, stopping at times before the other, lifting his finger as though remonstrating or presenting some objection. They noticed, however, that Strabelli retained his seat, appearing like one who

was perfectly self-possessed and calm under all circumstances.

"I'd give somethin' to know what they're sayin'," whispered Mike. "It looks bad whin ye see the devil so aisy loike as that man seems to be in there."

"It's something new for DeCamp to be so much excited," answered his companion. "He must have been pretty badly broken up. He used to be as placid as a frozen lake in winter,—and as cold."

"Sure he's melted now intirely. Look a' that!" And they saw him fling away his cigar, and, using his right arm for a cushion, bend over and lean his head against the mantel-piece.

"Yes, I've seen a good deal of him, but I never saw him act in this way before. Melted! With that scoundrel so near him, I should think he would be melted. The brimstone he carries with him ought to melt an iceberg."

After this they remained silent, or spoke together only in an undertone, for perhaps two hours or more. Then Mike said, hesitatingly,—

"I don't loike to lave ye alone, Mr. Grant, but I haven't had any sleep now for three nights; an' before you came I was that worn wid anxiety that I might almost say I haven't had a good bit of a rest for more than a fortnight. Sure I begin to feel a little queer loike in me head; an' if you'll excuse me lavin' ye, I'd loike to go home an' have a bit of a rest."

"Go; go, my good fellow; of course go right away," exclaimed Waldemar. "I ought to have thought of it myself."

He looked at the face of his companion as the light shone upon it brightly from the window, and for the

first time observed a strange, wild appearance in his eye. For several hours before, Mike had experienced an intense pain at the back of his head; but his desire to remain with Waldemar, and the excitement of the occasion, had led him to bear it silently as long as possible.

"Go, my good fellow," repeated Waldemar. But as he spoke they heard a distant rumbling. They looked up at the heavens; black clouds had been slowly gathering, like the wing of some great evil spirit hovering over the stricken city.

"Hello, we're going to have a storm," said Waldemar; and he buttoned his greatcoat up around his chin. They had been so deeply engaged in watching the proceedings of the two men that they had not noticed the coming of the tempest until it was upon them. Suddenly forked lightning darted from out the clouds, followed by a reverberating crash of thunder.

"Sure that must ha' struck pretty close."

"It's going to be an awful night. I suppose I might as well return with you. He certainly would not think of leaving in the midst of such a storm as this will be. He is surely safe till to-morrow."

They stood close together under a tree waiting for the pelting rain to subside, but it only increased in force. Their shelter soon proved of little avail, for the branches dripped with water, drenching them to the skin. Presently there came another flash, followed by a peal which seemed to shake the very ground on which they stood.

"I think I better be goin'," said Mike, the pain in his head increasing.

"Wait a moment; it cannot continue like this for long."

The trees swayed and bent in the wind, like living giants struggling in death. The autumn leaves fell about them at their feet, their feeble hold broken by the tempest, and here and there the very branch to which they had clung torn from the tree and cast to earth. Then the fire-bells began to ring.

"Faith, an' I believe it must ha' struck somewhere," said Mike, putting his hand up to his head, looking up to the sky to see whether he could discover any signs of the storm abating. But another flash and deafening peal made them start as the ground again trembled beneath their feet.

Up the street they heard the hurried clattering of horses' hoofs and the lumbering roll of heavy wheels. It was the fire department answering the alarm-bell. The engine rattled past, and, turning the corner of the street below, disappeared, the noise of its wheels being lost amid the vehemence of the wind and rain.

"Look!" cried Waldemar, "there's one of them at the porch."

Mike looked, and saw Strabelli peer into the darkness, and then retire and shut the door.

"See that; he's put on his hat and coat," as he appeared in the library a few moments later. "And there's DeCamp with his on, too. I wonder what this can mean?"

Mike tried to pay attention, but the pain in his head had so increased that it was only with difficulty he could comprehend what his companion said. When, however, he saw the door open and the two emerge into the blinding darkness and storm, it aroused him once more to renewed interest.

"Go home; I will watch and follow them."

"No, not yet. Sure nobody knows whin that divil's goin' to make a spring. Lord helpin' me, I can stand this for a toime yet."

The two men turned down toward the city. Mike and Waldemar followed them. It was now toward midnight, and most of the streets were deserted. They met the fire-engine returning; the rain had somewhat abated, and one or two of the men were walking along the pavement by its side. They chanced to be passing the window of a drug-store which remained open all night when they met the men, and by its light Mike recognized one of them whom he knew, and replied to the fireman's salutation.

"Bad night to be out," grunted the man.

"Yes," replied he, and passed on.

Silence. Nothing heard but the steady dripping of the rain, which was now abating, and the occasional faint rumble in the distance, like the last shots of a retreating army.

"They're turning down toward the bank," said Waldemar, who in his eagerness had strayed a few steps in front of his companion. He received no response, but walked on, supposing that Mike was just behind him. Bethinking himself, he stopped that the other should come up; but when he looked back he was gone. "Poor fellow! he ought not to have come out to-night," he murmured. "He looked sick before we left the house, now that I think of it."

It was as Waldemar had conjectured; they were going toward the bank. He watched them till they had ascended the steps and entered. Then he hid himself in

the shadow of a door-way. An hour passed, broken only by the measured tread of the watchman, whom he could plainly see from his retreat, though unobserved himself, and the occasional shrill weird call of his whistle when he had reached the limits of his patrol, and the answering note from the officer on the next beat, to show that they were keeping within hailing distance.

The storm had now cleared away, and, like troops disbanding after a battle, the clouds had gradually disappeared. The moon shone forth; and as Waldemar had nothing else to do, he fell to thinking of her whom he should see to-morrow. He fancied to himself that this evening had been but a parable of his experiences; and he rejoiced to think that the clouds were already breaking away and the light beginning to shine.

Suddenly, as he was engaged in this delightful meditation, he started at hearing what he imagined to be a cry for help. He listened; perhaps he was mistaken. No, there it was again; this time muffled as though one were being stifled, but had succeeded for a moment in tearing away the knot.

"Help! Help! Murder!"

He hesitated no longer. The cries came from the bank building. Reaching the steps, and turning to rush up to gain admittance, the door suddenly opened, and a man carrying in his hand a satchel dashed into the street. Springing upon him, Waldemar threw him to the ground, and they rolled down the steps together. It was a struggle for life or death. The man lifting a billy with one hand, which became momentarily disengaged, endeavored to strike his captor on the head. The other was quick enough to thwart him, however,

and he received the blow on his arm. While they were thus engaged, another man rushed forth, slamming the door tight shut after him, and turning a corner, leaping into a carriage which stood not far away, where a confederate was in waiting, drove rapidly down the street. At last the young man succeeded in planting his knee on the breast of his antagonist; the light from the street lamp shone down into his face, and he discovered Strabelli. Only for a moment, however, did he have the advantage; Mike's greatcoat hindered his contending, and the man once more securing the freedom of his hands, though he had lost his weapon, with a mighty effort threw Waldemar from him, and by rolling on top of him pinioned him to the earth.

Approaching footsteps were heard, and Strabelli, seeing it was too late to escape, began shouting lustily for help.

"Thieves! Murder! Murder!" he cried, while throwing his body over the face of his antagonist to prevent him from crying out.

An officer quickly approached, sounding his whistle while he ran, which was immediately responded to by his companion from the next beat, who came hurrying up a few minutes later.

"Hold him! Hold him!" screamed Strabelli.

The officer drew his club, and flourishing it above the young man's head, bade him stop fighting and submit to arrest.

"Hold *him!*" Waldemar cried, excitedly, as soon as the other had been lifted from him.

"Take 'em both in, Bob," said the first officer at last.

The moon shone peacefully down on the city lying fast asleep, and all unmindful of the awful tidings which should echo from lip to lip, and be repeated a thousand times, before the coming sun should set again. It heard already the clanging of the presses stamping out the news upon the printed sheet, and seeming to cry to all the town, "Awake! Awake!" It looked in through the casement of bank and prison. It saw one guilty man seated, cool and calm, within his cell, calculating his chances, and meditating how he might use them to the very best. It saw one true and noble soul charged with an awful crime, all helpless and bewildered in his innocence. And with the band still bound about his mouth, an ugly scar upon his head, it saw another, lying on the bank floor—dead.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### AN OLD FRIEND ARRIVES AT THE POOR-HOUSE.

THE reason Mike had left so suddenly was because he felt the approach of the old symptoms of temporary insanity. The constant watching, and the anxiety accompanying it, had proved too great a strain for his nervous system; and, already dazed and scarcely accountable for what he did, he had wandered off, leaving his friend to pursue his errand alone.

The comparatively quiet life which he had been leading for the past few years had kept him almost free from

these attacks; only twice had he become their victim since his removal to Groveland, and on each of these occasions he had felt their approach in time to hasten to an asylum a few hours' railroad ride from the city where he was not known, except as a patient without a history.

As he felt the mania drawing near, the one conviction which seized him was that he must reach, as soon as he could, this place of retreat. When he had parted from Waldemar he had hurried home, and started forth after changing his apparel, without waiting for the morning to dawn. No train was at the depot, and so he turned his steps along the track, as though to walk to what he felt to be a place of refuge. His reasoning faculties were by this time sufficiently obtuse to fail of convincing him of the absurdity of such a step; so he continued walking all night long, satchel in hand, until by the morning's dawn he found himself, weary and worse than ever, many miles from home.

After having wandered a considerable distance he had diverged from the line of the track, taking a road which ultimately led him to a small village. It was an ordinary town, just such as the traveller will frequently meet in his journeys through any one of the Western States.

There was the one street where the stores were located, some of them built in blocks, but the majority surrounded by dismal-looking lots, or rather, yards, with the grass worn off, leaving the brown dirt to remind the pedestrian of the delights of rural life. There were the occasional rubbish-heaps dumped down at the side of the store building, and a hog now and then perambulating through the principal thoroughfare, and sinking to his knees in the mire. There was the corner liquor-store, with its

green blinds, and the figure of the corpulent Gambrinus over the door, holding in his uplifted hand the gilded glass of liquor with wooden foam falling over the sides, and the customary number of disciples of pleasure, in muddy boots and patched pants, sitting in variety of postures on beer-kegs about the door, discussing such grave problems as protection and free trade, emphasizing their zealous if not learned arguments by exclamations which began "with a big, big D," and are so much in vogue among gentlemen of this class; meanwhile (not to be found wasting time in idleness) filling in the breathing-spaces by industriously squirting tobacco-juice over the sidewalk.

There were the great unpainted board awnings, stretching from the store to the gutter, and gathered under them, leaning against the posts or reclining on boxes, all types of village humanity at rest. It was, in short, one of those most home-sickening of all places in the known world, a town in the making.

At about ten o'clock in the morning Mike entered this abode of the blessed, weary and faint, not knowing where he was, and scarcely knowing what he did. He was not capable of reasoning about it, but the exceeding desolation of the place made his heart heavy. Seeing a hotel, he went in, and staggering up to the counter, asked for something to eat.

"I guess you mean somethin' to drink, don't you?" And the proprietor looked at his wild and yet worn appearance.

He had not been there long before his insanity became more violent. So the sheriff was summoned, and Mike was marched off to jail and put into the "cooler," charged

with intoxication. What he suffered there, alone by himself, it were idle to attempt to tell. The crowd which gathered outside, and mocked his cries with their jibes, thought it rare sport; he, however, within, was living over again the experiences of that awful night when he wandered through the streets of New York in search of Porta, and seeking to kill him in his rage.

By the close of the next day the sheriff concluded that there must be something ailing him besides mere drunkenness, and applied to the county house physician, who pronounced him sick, advising that he be removed to the establishment under his charge, until he should be sufficiently restored to give some account of himself and his circumstances.

For several days he lay there, literally in torment. The poor-house being a State institution, and the post of overseer, according to the wisdom of "the best government under the sun," being in the line of political appointments, the present incumbent was a gentleman who had shown his fitness for such a position by his ability to influence the Irish vote at the last election. The former appointee had been there for many years and grown old in the service. No fault had ever been found with him; he was a kind old man, honest as any one in all the world, and, withal, not so desirous to secure money for election purposes that he would be likely to save it out of the amount devoted to the purchase of supplies for the inmates of his institution. He had been the overseer ever since the election of Abraham Lincoln, and had grown to know the wants of the people, and how to meet them with the least possible expense. The State, however, had recently "gone Dem-

ocratic," and it was necessary to "turn the rascals out," because, if they did not, some other rascals might not be able to make a living, and that would be too bad. So he was convicted of the crime of having voted the Republican ticket every year since his installation, and he must therefore go.

Mr. Michael Tipps, accordingly, owing to the prominent position he had sustained among politicians and the benefit he had been to the party, was appointed to succeed him; whereupon he transferred the care of the corner liquor-store, previously described, to the charge of his son, and assumed the important office of guardian to the poor and helpless.

Whenever, in former times, Mike had been subject to these attacks, he had been treated with tenderness, and every want supplied. Mr. Tipps, however, having never made a study of any other form of insanity than that of delirium tremens, called by him the Blue Devils, or, if he chanced to be in a playful mood, the D. T., and being acquainted with no treatment so efficacious in case of violence as that which he had learned at the boxing-matches which he had formerly attended when a resident of the fourth ward in New York City, had a very simple remedy at hand for cases of mental aberration. When Mike became violent, he summoned assistance, and knocked him down; and when that did not suffice either to quiet him or render him insensible, he proved his abiding confidence in his remedy by repeating the same treatment as often as necessary, until the desired effect had been secured.

To be sure, during the nine months in which he had had charge of the institution two such cases had, under

his treatment, terminated fatally; but then every physician must expect to lose some patients, and such an occurrence does not in all instances argue against the efficacy of the medicine.

As the weeks passed by and Mike's mind began to grow clearer, they tried to find out from him the facts concerning himself. He, however, persisted in refusing all such information, and would have been incontinently sent off as a punishment for his recalcitration, had not the fact become apparent to the mind of mr. Tipps (as he was accustomed to write his name) that there would be abundance of means in the well-filled pocket-book of Mike wherewith to pay his board and allow something handsome besides in the way of remunerating him, mr. Tipps, for his arduous labors in knocking him down so often. "If Hans was only anywhere this side o' the sea," Mike one day said to himself, as he lay in his bed feeling utterly miserable, "I believe I'd sind for him, so I would."

Then the thought crossed his mind that perhaps he might have returned to his home in Jenkinstown. He knew this was his intention some time, as he had been unable to dispose of all his little property before leaving for Germany. Finally he determined to write him a letter, directing it to the town in New Jersey where he might possibly be living, and acquaint him with his circumstances. He could trust him; no one in Groveland had thus far known of his attacks of insanity, and he was exceedingly anxious that no one should. This was the reason he had so steadfastly refused to give any information concerning himself. A letter was accordingly despatched, after having been read by the authorities,

though not much to their enlightenment, and a few days after who should walk in but Hans himself.

He was not much changed; he had been obliged to get Katrine to let out the waistband of his pantaloons somewhat, and he had grown more bald. He wore a short coat which he had brought with him from abroad, and which on account of its ridiculous brevity, when judged by the standard of our own fashion-plates, caused him to present from the background an appearance at once striking and voluminous. The effect upon the American observer was usually to provoke laughter at his grotesque figure; a liberty which was by no means relished nor understood by Hans, who, with characteristic simplicity, believed that garments were made to be worn till they were worn out.

Mike heard his voice in the hallway before he entered, exclaiming to his attendant in excited tones of impatience,—

"Goodness gracious, vas dis der place vere I find mine old friend, by chiminey? Show me dot room right avay quick, vere he was already."

For the first time in many weeks the sick man's heart bounded with gladness. He had scarcely dared to hope that Hans had returned, and at the most had only looked for a letter stating that some time in the near future he would come on; but here indeed he was, with his happy, rollicking, blundering ways, and with a heart as true as ever throbbed under a Dutchman's roundabout.

"Right in here," said the man, in a slow, sleepy voice; one of the paupers about the establishment.

"Right in here? No, no; wrong in here. Oh, Michael, mine old friend, mine old friend!" wabbling

toward him and putting out his arms, while his voice quivered with emotion. "I jumps me vild mit joyness to see you already, but I cries mine eyes oudt to see you here."

Mike, on his part, weak with sickness and ill treatment, was not prepared to say much, but he pressed the hand which that doughty individual thrust into his, preparatory to putting his arms about his neck and kissing him in genuine good old German style. When this operation had been performed and Hans had partially composed himself, he continued,—

"I don't vant to be onquisitive, but I feels like I vas crazy to know, Michael, vat brings you here?"

The ragged pauper still stood in the open door, ready to avail himself of any circumstance which might lend variety to the monotonous existence of the poor-house. Mike looked toward him, and Hans guessed immediately that he wished him to leave.

"Get oudt uf here," he cried, doubling up his fist as the hatchet-faced individual stood with open mouth and listening ears. "You vant to go round und talk about somedings behind you back in front of you face? uh?"

The cadaverous person addressed, who in fact was semi-idiotic, did not seem to comprehend. So Hans shied a boot-jack at him, which caused him to become panic-stricken at once and instantly to flee. The German then walked toward the door and closed it.

"Now tell me, Michael, mine old friend, all about it." Resuming his place at the bedside.

Mike, stopping to rest occasionally and regain his breath, related the story of what had taken place during the years of Hans' absence.

"Goodness gracious!" that individual exclaimed when he had finished, leaving the story incomplete at the point where Waldemar and he had gone forth to follow De-Camp and Strabelli on their way to the bank. "I vould radder to gif fifty tollar as to know vat dey did down dere, und how it all came oudt." Then clapping his hands together and resting his chin on his finger-tips for a moment, he whispered in a low tone, "Michael, vat did you say dot feller's name vas already?"

"Which one?"

"Der feller dot vos mit you dot night all around."

"Waldemar; Waldemar Grant."

"Goodness gracious! Dot was awful strange; don't it?"

He looked toward a newspaper which he had thrown down on the bed when he had come in, and slowly rolled his eyes toward Mike, as one would do if he were watching a slumberer whom he did not wish to awaken. Then he stealthily reached out his hand toward the journal. Mike, who noticed the strange movement (for his eyes were wide open all the time), and who had not seen the paper lying there, looked up.

"What do ye want?" he asked.

Hans drew his hand back, and tried to assume an unconscious expression, as though nothing in the world weighed on his mind.

"Nodings; I don't vant nodings," he answered.

They remained silent for a few moments, when Mike observed a repetition of the mysterious movements on the part of his friend; but the moment he spoke the hand was withdrawn as before, and the same expression of assumed guilelessness draped the countenance of his companion.

At last he thought he would lie still and see what the result would be, as the strange conduct of his friend began to perplex him. Stealthily the same motions were repeated, except that, being this time uninterrupted by any exclamation from Mike, the hand was carried a little farther until it reached and grasped the paper; then it was quietly and slowly drawn back again, the owner keeping watch of Mike meantime, though it was evident that the eyes of the latter were as wide open as ever.

"What's that?" said he.

"Nodings; only der morning papers," stuffing the *Groveland Journal*, which he had bought on the train, into his pocket. Mike was too tired with the occurrences of the morning thus far to make further inquiry, and both remained in unbroken silence for a considerable time, Hans employing this time in slyly drawing the paper from his pocket and reading something in which he appeared to be deeply interested; thrusting it back into its hiding-place again whenever Mike looked up or ventured a remark. Finally he said,—

"Michaels, if I tells you somedings vill you promise not to be oxcited?"

Nothing could have been said better calculated to produce the result which the good German was so anxious to avoid. Mike looked up, while his face flushed, and exclaimed,—

"What's the matter wid ye anyhow, Hans? Speak out an' tell me what ye've got to say. What was in that paper?"

"Oh, goodness gracious, how did you know anydings vas in dot papers? Oh, vat shall I do? If I tells you vat vas in dot papers, you vill be so oxcited as never

vas; und if I don't told you, den you don't know somedings vat you ought to know."

"What's in that paper? Let me have it quick. Is anything the matter with Katie? Quick, I say." And lifting himself on his elbow, he reached over and snatched it out of Hans' hand.

"Vell, mine friend, if you must read it, I suppose you must. I don't got no odder vay vat I knows about; but if you get oxcited, und falls more sick as before, it von't be no fault of mine. I did mine very best not to let you find it oudt."

"Where is it?" And Mike trembled with impatience.

"Over here in der right-hand column on der left-hand side." And Hans pointed with his finger to the place. "But remember, if it makes you sick, mine friend, I don't told you to read it. You can't read it all, anyhow; half der paper vas gone already."

With eager eyes Mike glanced at the paragraph, and read:

"There probably has never been a case in this city which has excited such universal attention as the trial of Waldemar Grant, which is now in progress, for the murder of his relative and our lamented fellow-citizen, Mr. George DeCamp. The proceedings have been delayed longer than at first was thought necessary, as the authorities have been seeking to find his supposed accomplices, and, if guilty, to bring them to justice at the same time. One of them has been secured. It is a pity, however, that the other has not yet been heard from. He was last seen walking up the track, at a late hour on the night of the ghastly crime, but since then all efforts to trace him have——"

The rest of the article had been printed on one of the missing pages, and its contents could therefore only be surmised.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### IN COURT.

MIKE threw down the paper and sprang from his bed. "Hans," he cried, "I must go up to Groveland by the next stage."

"Vell, now, didn't I told you so? Didn't I told you dot you vould be gettin' oxcited? Lie right down here, Michael, mine friend. Do you vant to be put into der perlice-station, uh? My gracious, der longer as you live der more you don't know. You act so crazy like a lunatic," seeing that his words appeared to have little effect.

"Go down-stairs an' foind what toime the stage starts, Hans, or begorra I'll start an' walk, so I will."

Hans went out into the hall, and returned in a few minutes, when he thought he had been gone long enough.

"Der stage vas all proke down, Michael, und it don't go till two veeks from to-morrow." Then fancying that his announcement lacked a certain flavor of probability, he added, "I proke it down mineself." He stretched out his fat little legs and his correspondingly chubby arms, and as the other looked at his goodly proportions the statement seemed less unlikely.

"Get me a carriage, thin; quick!"

Hans went out again, not knowing what else to do, but determined that if he could prevent it Mike should not venture, in his present weak condition, among the exciting scenes of the trial. Had he supposed that any help could have been rendered to Waldemar, he might have felt differently; but so anxious was he for his sick friend that he had not comprehended the necessity of his presence at the prisoner's side. He walked up and down the hall, wringing his hands and ejaculating to himself,—

"Oh, poor Michael! Here he vas gone mit der crazy again, already. Here he vas getting vorse as he never vas before."

Finally a happy thought struck him, and running in, he cried out,—

"Oh, Michael, mine friend, vat you tinks? Dey got der smallpox dere, und dey don't let nobody into der city. Now I tells yer vat yer do. You crawl back into you bed right avay quick, by chiminey, und if yer vants to send a message to dot young feller in Groveland, I vill take it, by gracious, mine ownself."

Delighted with the brilliancy of his suggestion and the irrefragable argument with which it was presented, he stood in the middle of the room, with his forehead wrinkled, his shoulders thrown up, and the palms of his hands turned out.

"If they wouldn't let me in, I'd loike to know, begorra, how ye could get in yourself?"

Hans sank into a chair and, gazing down at the floor, while he laid his finger meditatively along the side of his nose, murmured,—

"By chiminey!"

Soon Mike began to feel the reaction from his nervous excitement, and with very exhaustion was at last glad to seek his bed. He made one or two more attempts during the day to rise, but each time was compelled to return again to his pillow. At last he reluctantly consented that Hans should go to Groveland in his stead, seeking out Waldemar if possible, and if not, his counsel; learning from them in what way Mike could be most useful, and convey his willingness to appear at the first moment his returning strength should allow.

The good German accepted the commission, after having unburdened his conscience by acknowledging his attempts at deception; apologizing for the same by telling Mike that he had feared he was not himself, but had "gone mit der crazy."

Early the next morning he started, bearing a letter, that Waldemar might know there was no mistake. He reached the city before the opening of the court, and, joining the crowd, succeeded in securing a place where he could see and hear all which transpired. They had just concluded listening to the testimony of the witnesses, and thus he was in time to hear the prosecuting attorney's closing speech.

It was an odd sight which the court-room presented. The many faces were of course strange to Hans, but he was able to distinguish readily the fine, open countenance of the prisoner, and as he looked into his eyes he felt convinced of his innocence. It must be remembered that even Mike did not know any of the events which had occurred after he had left Waldemar on that memorable night. He at this time was tossing restlessly in his bed, anxious and oppressed with fearful forebodings lest, in

the heat of an encounter, the young man had been betrayed by his impetuosity, and had actually committed the awful deed, the bare statement of which he had received so unexpectedly.

Hans, on his part, felt like cursing all the powers that be for even supposing that a young man like the one he saw before him could be guilty of such a heinous crime. He was almost tempted to rise and propose to the assembled multitude that they rally *en masse* and take him out of the hands of the blundering officials, who could be guilty of so terrible a mistake.

On the morning when the trial had first opened, Waldemar had found himself by no means alone. The three judges and the twelve sapient jurymen (who had evinced their fitness for their responsible positions by each one swearing that he belonged to the least intelligent class of the community, inasmuch as he had neither read nor expressed an opinion about the murder which had been in everybody's mouth for weeks) looked down on a gathering of the very best men in the community, who had rallied to show their confidence in the prisoner's innocence, and encourage him as they might by their presence.

This fact argued strongly against the prisoner in the minds of several of the intelligent jurymen, because it showed to them clearly that a plan was being inaugurated for acquitting him simply because he belonged to the aristocracy. One of them, moreover, had caught sight, among Waldemar's friends, of a gentleman who had once threatened him with prosecution for having sold liquor to boys and making them drunk for the amusement of his customers. He scowled very fiercely and looked determined. Two others who had occasionally read some

of the editorials in the *Penny Scavenger*, and who accordingly firmly believed that all capitalists were lying awake nights to devise new methods by which to plunder and crush the poor laboring man, made up their minds before hearing an argument which way they would cast their ballots.

Waldemar, sitting, surrounded by his counsel, glanced over occasionally into the faces of his friends, nodding pleasantly to such as he recognized, and yet with a certain quiet repose which showed that he realized the gravity of his position. There sat Mr. Russell, who from the first, in the face of all rumors and the overwhelming evidence at the preliminary examination, had protested stoutly that the young man was incapable of the crime. There was the white-haired father, leaning on his cane, and the mother, her gray locks showing between her pure face and the neat bonnet like the white border between a beautiful picture and its frame.

The tears sprang into his eyes when he looked upon that face, so sad, so tender, and yet so hopeful. He knew she was trying to hide her trouble for his sake, and he whispered involuntarily, "God bless her!"

But much as he was cheered by the sight of these, there was one other face in that group which made his heart leap, and prisoner though he was, charged with so dreadful a crime that the very thought made his blood run chill, he forgot all for the moment, and it seemed to him, when he first saw it, that the happiest moment of his life had dawned.

There were the sweet young features which had been with him in his dreams through all the dreary months of his absence; the features of her who, every day of

his imprisonment, had come to his cell with flowers. She believed in him! What though the twelve dullards yonder should condemn him! What though the whole county should assemble to see him hang! She believed in him; and was not that heaven enough for one man? She, and the father yonder, and the old mother: they knew he was innocent, what mattered it about all the world beside? And that smile was for him! And he felt in that hour that it was worth dying for to have a glance like that from the pure soul of the girl who believed in him, and came herself to his side, when the whole world called him guilty.

Yes, Katie was there; and Mrs. Russell. All had been explained, and though he had not been able to present the proofs, as he had unfortunately burned the letters in his impetuous madness, they at least did not need anything but his word, let the evidence against him be never so strong. They were there, and they believed in him.

His face darkened as he saw, near the table of the prosecuting attorney, Strabelli. After Waldemar's arrest and his own release, he had hastened to Katie's side to press with renewed ardor his suit, and to condole with Mrs. DeCamp. This lady trusted him thoroughly, and accepted every statement without a question; and so the public generally, sympathizing with the widow, thought as she did.

"Was he not dear George's intimate friend?" she would exclaim, if any one dared to suggest the possibility of his possessing a greater knowledge of the crime than he chose to tell.

That she felt the blow—felt it deeply, as such people

do for the time at least—there was no doubt. When she first received the news she went into convulsions, and for several days was very sick; but as the weeks went by, and Strabelli was constant in his attendance upon her, we cannot truthfully deny that she, in the secrecy of her own heart (the most secret secrecy of her own heart, such as you yourself possess, reader, with all the rest of us, into whose chamber she scarcely dared to look herself), began to think about that villa near Venice, and to wonder how society would take it if she should (after a reasonable time of course) become an Italian countess.

He on his part, feeling so secure in the absence of all evidence against him save the statement of the prisoner, and having learned that though DeCamp had died intestate there was a fifty-thousand-dollar insurance policy to be paid to the widow, resolved to remain stubbornly to the end, and then, if he could, pocket the widow and the proceeds thereof. If there was no better way of disposing of her, he could at least take her to a climate where she should catch a bad cold.

Katie having received word from Waldemar in the mean time, had repelled Strabelli with indignation and scorn. So there he sat, as one of the principal witnesses against the prisoner, stroking his moustache, and occasionally looking from him to her, chafing with anger, but resolved that no betrayal of his emotions should appear on his countenance.

At length the lawyer for the prosecution arose, and, having addressed the court in respectful terms, and complimented the jury with unstinted eulogy on account of their rare intelligence, he proceeded:

"It is with a sense of the most profound regret that I find myself compelled by the stern voice of duty to occupy a position like this to-day." He paused for a moment, and amid the intense silence the clock could be heard ticking against the wall.

"In the stillness of the night, when the thunder of the tempest is over our city, and the bell in the steeple is striking twelve; when the shadows of slumber have fallen on the eyes of that great body of law-abiding citizens of which this commonwealth is fortunately composed, one of our most esteemed fellow-townsmen is summoned from his house by the ringing of the door-bell. A bank watchman is there; and the information is conveyed to this gentleman that the storm has broken through the skylight of the bank of which he is the honored president, flooding the floor, and calling for his immediate presence."

Wiping his forehead, he continued: "An awful murder was committed, and"—hesitating lest he should give the opposing counsel an opportunity to interrupt, and thus destroy the impressiveness of his speech—"and the murdered man was the husband of this stricken widow, Mrs. Colonel Squealum DeCamp."

She took out an embroidered pocket-handkerchief perfumed with ottar of roses and dusted her eyes.

"It is indeed a sad sight to see a young man, possessed of such exceptional opportunities for usefulness as the prisoner, brought up amid the amenities of refined society and all the accessories of wealth,"—here the reader of the *Penny Scavenger* shut his eyes wisely and opened them again, and concluded from the context that amenities must mean, in the language of his neighborhood,

"big-bugs," and accessories "spondulix," otherwise "the filthy," otherwise "nuggets,"—"should be charged to-day, before a jury of his intelligent fellow-citizens, with the commission of that crime." Here he paused again, feeling that an oratorical climax had been reached, and he must give the audience time to taste its full sweetness before destroying its flavor with the next tidbit. There was a slight stir, and then the scratching of the reporters' pencils could be heard by those near by, writing, "(sensation)," "(rustle among the audience)," etc.

When quiet reigned again, the stillness was broken by a loud sniffle. The judges turned their eyes toward Hans, who sat all unconscious of the attention this expression of sympathy elicited. One of them then took a pinch of snuff, and the speaker began once more:

"Among all the cases of which I have read, or with which I have had professional connection, I grieve to say that I have never met with any where the proofs of crime have been so thorough and convincing as in this which causes us to assemble before this honorable tribunal." Here was another chance for a sensational climax, and, laying his knuckles on the green-covered table before him, and gazing intently down at them, he was about to give the hungering assembly the full benefit of the same. His purpose, however, was discovered by the opposing counsel, who ruthlessly destroyed the effect by rising to his feet and suggesting that the learned gentleman confine himself to a statement of facts; that the purpose of their coming together was not to hear of the extent of his reading, or of the large number of criminal cases in which he had been engaged professionally.

Looking up from the green cloth, the other cast an angry glance at the speaker, and continued,—

"May it please the court, the testimony, as I have already stated, is of the strongest character, and points with scarcely the chance of a doubt to the conviction that this young man, who had been blessed with such exceptional advantages, has, in the declining years of his devoted parents, brought to them anguish and disgrace, while staining his own hands with the innocent blood of a brother man.

"We have shown, by evidence which we feel to be irrefutable, that this crime was not committed without a motive; and that that motive was first of all jealousy. That in some way this misguided youth had gained the impression that Mr. DeCamp, his own uncle by marriage, was his bitter enemy, and that he had been influencing a certain most estimable young lady to transfer her affections from himself to another person. That that feeling of hatred had been strengthened by a most unfortunate feud existing between these two families for several years. That he had written a threatening letter to the deceased only a few days before the commission of the crime, in which he used this expression: 'The time will come when I will make you rue this. I will never forget it, and I will never forgive it.'

"We have shown that almost immediately after writing this threatening epistle he started from the town in Germany where his fond parents were supporting him at a celebrated university, travelling secretly, and arriving in this city without having communicated his intention to any one of leaving the place of his studies, except to a confederate who met him at the depot, and conveyed

him in a closed carriage to that confederate's own apartments. There they remained together until, when night drew on, they sallied forth under cover of its darkness; and at the very time when the doting and trusting parents of this unhappy prisoner supposed that he was pursuing his studies in a foreign land, he was in truth prowling these streets in a borrowed disguise, and in company with this person before mentioned, who, though he had occupied those apartments for many years previous to the murder, on that very night departed, and has not been heard from since."

Hans placed his hand behind his ear, leaned forward, and whispered, "By chiminey!"

"We have shown, moreover, an additional motive for the perpetration of this crime, in the fact that this young man's father had recently failed in business; that in various letters which he wrote to different parties he expressed himself as feeling this failure of his father very deeply, and that he looked forward with intensest solicitude to the probability of his being obliged to cease his studies and surrender the brilliant prospects which appeared to be opening before him. That he had, furthermore, gained the impression in some manner that the threatened rupture between himself and the object of his affections was in a measure the result of his altered circumstances. That on that very night he was found by one of the witnesses in this case (pointing to Strabelli) leaving the bank with a satchel in his hand, containing in bank-bills more than three hundred thousand dollars.

"We have shown that there were in league with him two confederates. One a certain Mike Barney, already referred to, a former watchman of the bank, and thus

acquainted with the habits of the deceased, so proving a most useful ally in time of need; the other the watchman in the bank at the time of the murder, who is now confined awaiting a separate trial. He too disappeared on that night, taking with him his share of the booty, fifty thousand dollars, most of which has been recovered, with the arrest of the criminal, since this trial began. Neither has it been upon the testimony of one or two witnesses that this young man has been convicted; the strongest witness against him is himself.

"We have presented to this honorable court a copy of the despatch sent by him to the confederate who has thus far eluded the hand of justice, but who was at that time passing under an assumed name; a despatch which, addressing him under this false cognomen, says, 'Am coming. Watch him. Will reward you well,' and signed Waldemar Grant.

"We have shown that this man Barney, eluding observation by various devices, was lurking about that place until the deceased came to this city; that then he followed him; that, going to the depot, he there met, evidently by prearrangement, the prisoner, and by the testimony of the driver who drove them home we have shown that when they met he said to this young man, 'My name is Michael Barney; but the name you're to know me by is Michael McGuiness. Whist now, don't say a word.' And that the prisoner answered, 'Then you are the man who is to help me track that villain to earth.' And that this was said on the very day of the murder.

"That this hack-driver, fearing foul play from what he had overheard, followed them when they went out together, in disguise. That he saw them lurking for

more than an hour in front of the residence of the deceased, and that when a terrible storm drove him to seek the shelter of his home they were still there. That they were seen by some firemen returning from a fire at a late hour, following the deceased and his friend Signor Strabelli on their way to the bank; that when the prisoner was arrested, the officers found him trying to release himself from the grasp of Strabelli, who was holding on to him and shouting for help. Arriving at the station-house he manifested the greatest degree of nervousness, accusing his captor with the commission of the deed,—a statement which the whole appearance of the other went to falsify, together with his intimate relations with the family of the deceased; he, moreover, remaining cool and calm, like an innocent person, while this young man made several statements, not even consistent with one another.

"And we have shown finally, gentlemen, that the very key of the bank building was found in the pocket of the greatcoat in which the young man was disguised. Now I ask, if he were a guilty man and had been intercepted in his flight by this gentleman, what would you suppose him to say in his defence? Just what he has had the effrontery before this intelligent jury to say, to wit: that this key was thrust into his pocket by his captor while he lay across his body pinning him to the earth.

"Here, gentlemen, members of this intelligent jury, is the statement of facts as they have been drawn out from these reliable and, many of them, unwilling witnesses. Was there ever proof more complete? Not a link missing in all the chain. Was there ever a better commentary on those words of holy writ, 'Be sure your sin will find you out'? or those other words, which the

awful history of this young man ought to burn into the hearts of us all, 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'?

"For the parents of this prisoner, yea, for the prisoner himself, we can only feel the deepest sympathy; but we are not here to yield to our sympathies. We must carry our brains to-day not in our hearts, but in our heads. A great crime has been committed, not merely against this man, so suddenly thrust into the presence of his Maker, and against this woman, so cruelly bereaved of a fond and indulgent husband, but against society. No citizen is safe while a murderer walks at large through these streets; and I call upon you to-day to give that decision which shall enable you to be loyal to the community in which you dwell, to your own consciences, and to your God."

He sat down amid the most impressive silence. The chief judge took another pinch of snuff, and said,—

"The court's adjourned until two o'clock."

His associates gathered about to congratulate him on the success of his eloquent appeal. His wife, waiting at the court-room door, saw bright visions of a place for him in the legislature at the next election. The jury filed out; the reporters gathered up their utensils and hurried off in different directions to get their copy into the printers' hands; and Waldemar was led back again into his lonely cell.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

HANS BECOMES INITIATED INTO THE SECRETS OF THE BAR.

HANS went out, scarcely knowing what to do with the letter he had received from Mike. When he had arrived that morning there had been no time to deliver it, because the court was just beginning its session, so that it was still in his possession. He took a turn around the block, walking quite fast, his hands in his pockets and his eyes bent on the sidewalk, trying to devise some method by which he might satisfy his promise to Mike, and still avoid the delivery of the letter.

"Dot vas too bad! Such a nice young man, too," he said to himself. "Until I vas hear dot man say dem tings to dot jury, I vould haf schworn mine lifes avay dot he vas innocent, by chiminey! It vas bad for Michael dot he vas in such company. It vas awful bad."

While he was thus soliloquizing, he looked up, and who should appear coming down the street but the district attorney, arm in arm with his opposing lawyer, as though they were the most confidential friends in all the world.

With open mouth and marvelling eyes he watched them, wondering whether he could be mistaken. No, there they were, sure enough; just as though one had never intimated of the other that he was seeking to show the depth of his learning or the extent of his practice.

They turned into a restaurant, and sat down in the farthest corner together. Hans, yielding to his impulse, followed them, and took his place at a table near by. They glanced over, but seeing only a fresh-looking German intently studying the bill of fare, they took no further notice.

"That was a good speech of yours, Davis," he overheard one say to another.

"Well, I think we've got you. Sad case anyhow, take it all in all. Poor fool, why didn't he know enough to cover up his tracks? What'll you have? Sherry?"

"No, I never drink anything before making a speech; it goes to my head. Besides that, I've got to hurry out. You've fired off your shot, you know. I've got mine to fire."

"Hope you're loaded. Pretty late to gather up the ammunition now."

"Yes, I'm loaded, but I've got to look at the trigger to see it don't catch. If I can, I'm going to shoot so straight as to cut right through the rope of that noose, and get that young fellow off."

"Well, I wish you good luck, but there's not much hope of that, I guess. He's got to swing," taking up his wineglass, holding it between him and the light, and then sipping it as though to test its quality. "It's a gone case, Cassius; the evidence is too strong against you."

"I don't know. You never can tell what a jury will do; especially a jury such as we've got this time."

"What a big set of fools they are, anyhow!" replied the district attorney, laughing. "There are some of

those old rascals I would a good deal rather see hung than Grant; and they'd swing a long sight quicker if they had their deserts, too."

Hans could scarcely believe his senses. Was this the same man whom he had heard addressing that jury in the court-room?

"The most mysterious thing about the case," replied the other, "is this disappearance of Barney. I can't reconcile that with what I've known of the fellow. Why, he's had a dozen chances to have walked away with enough money to have set him up for life, without the least necessity of killing anybody to get it, either. I think I can read character pretty well, and unless I am mightily mistaken he isn't the kind of a chap to commit murder for the sake of murder. I know men in this city—Russell, for instance—who still have such confidence in him that they would give ten thousand dollars to have him turn up in this trial."

"Well, you know the watchman who is now in jail says he received the money which we found upon him from Mike Barney."

"Oh, of course he'd say that to try to prove his own innocence. At any rate, I'd like to know where Barney is. If he could be found to corroborate some of these statements of Grant against Strabelli, there'd be some chance against you yet. Good-by; I must be off. Now if you interrupt me in my plea to those intelligent lunatics in the jury-box, and so spoil my best points, I'll flay you alive, old boy. There's just one hope I've got with those fellows: if I can get deep enough under their hide to find their feelings, if they have any,—get in some of the poor broken-hearted old father business, and that

kind of thing, you know,—and so fetch out their wipes, I may be able after all to get my client into the city of Refuge by the water route."

"All right; toss in the agony. I'll be on the lookout for you."

"I knew you would be anyhow, so I thought I might as well let you know beforehand just what I was going to do. Only if you've got any mercy in that hard old heart of yours," shaking the hand of his friend cordially, "don't be too ready to bring in your objections, and so smash things just at the moment when I'm getting them in tow; not for my sake, you know, I don't ask any odds; I'll do the very best I can for my client, and there my responsibility ceases, but for the sake of the young man. He doesn't look bad; and then there are his old parents. Really, without any bunkum, my heart aches for that mother. And his sweetheart! By George, if I had seen him do the deed, and then looked into those pleading eyes of hers, and was on that jury, I'd say he was innocent this time, but he mustn't do it again, that's all. So be easy as you can, old fellow."

"Not a bit of it," said the other, holding in one hand the palm of his companion, and a slice of bread in the other. "I play my game to win. If I find that I have three kings on the board, and my opponent has only two, I don't believe in that nonsense which chases him around trying to corner him; I change right off and beat him in the shortest way I can. A game's a game, you know; and no man who knows himself can afford to lose the stakes by dilly-dallying, when he has things in his own hand."

"Good-by."

"Good-by. Do your best. Now comes the tug of war. Look out for a unanimous verdict this afternoon."

Cassius hurried away, while the district attorney went on quietly enjoying his meal. Hans arose and followed him out, and when they had reached the street, he called quietly, stepping toward him,—

"Hello!"

Cassius turned to look at him. He stood a few feet behind, with his hand up to the side of his mouth, as one does when he addresses another in a sort of a stage whisper, meant for him alone.

"Do you want me?"

"Yah," standing still and beckoning mysteriously with his forefinger for Cassius to approach.

"Well, if you want me, hurry up, because I'm in great haste." He waited for Hans to advance.

"Vas you a friend to Michael Barney?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"'Cause if you vasn't a friend to Michael Barney, I don't got nodings to say mit you; but if you vas a friend to Michael Barney, I haf got some dings to talk vat vas a secret."

"Well, I'm his friend; go on."

"You sure dot you vas his friend?"

"Yes, yes, yes; hurry up."

"All right; den I go me right avay mit you. I don't vant dot odder feller to hear," pointing over his shoulder and putting his mouth close up to his companion's ear.

They walked away together, and soon reached the office of the lawyer.

"Step right in, my friend; now be quick, because I haven't any time to spare," throwing open the door and motioning to Hans.

The German went in and took a seat by the side of a table.

"Vas you sure dot you vas his friend?"

"Now, see here; if you have any communication to make to me, go on and stop this confounded nonsense, or else get out. I haven't any time to waste in this sort of thing." He was coming rapidly to the conclusion that Hans was a crank.

"Oh, vell; if you don't vant to know vat it vas,—all right!" turning out the palms of his hands, throwing up his shoulders, and shaking his head. "I vill go me back to Michael right avay quick, und tell him to keep his letters mit himself." He took his hat and started toward the door.

Cassius saw that he had stirred the ire of his visitor, and hearing the name of Mike, concluded that perhaps it might be well to deal with him more patiently.

"Oh, come, come; I didn't mean anything. Sit right down. We lawyers get in the habit of speaking quick, but it's all right. Do you come from Michael Barney?"

"How did you know dot?"

"Have you the letter which he wrote to Waldemar Grant?" with the keenness of his fraternity, jumping at the truth from the faint suggestion already furnished.

Hans' eyes opened wider than before, as he exclaimed,—

"Und how did you know dot?"

Cassius did not reply, but held out his hand. The German, dumfounded with astonishment, took the letter

out of his inside pocket and handed it to him, thinking to himself meanwhile,—

"Dem lawyers, dey vas strange fellers."

When Cassius had finished its perusal, he looked up with a keen, searching scrutiny of his visitor.

"Who wrote this?"

"Michael. I saw him write dot letter mit mine own eyes."

"He says here you'll state where he is. Where is he?"

"I don't tell vere he vas already unless you vas sure you vas his friend, and dot you von't haf him put into der station-house."

"Where is he?" cried the lawyer, losing all patience as he felt the time rapidly approaching when he must appear in court. He slapped his hand down on the table with such force as to make Hans jump out of his seat.

"Oh, good gracious! I dinks der house vas falling in, by chiminey, mit such a noise like dot."

"Where is he? Stop this nonsense and answer me directly, or I'll have *you* put into the station-house."

Hans said nothing, but only stared in bewilderment.

"Do you want to be arrested?"

"Vat? Put into der station-house?" He took up his hat and began to move quickly away. "No, by chiminey, I don't know nodings about Michael. I got anodder ongagement."

"See here; it's now half-past one o'clock," exclaimed Cassius, walking to the door, locking it, and putting the key in his pocket; "in thirty minutes I'm expected to appear to make a final address to the jury. If you can

speak straight, and stop talking like a corkscrew, and answer my questions, it may materially alter my course. I haven't a moment to waste. If you refuse to do this, I will have you arrested inside of five minutes; if you are willing to act like a sensible man, why, then, all right. Where is this Michael Barney? Sit down," nodding his head toward the chair which Hans had vacated.

The other, with despair in his countenance, went slowly back and resumed his place. The excitement had driven the name of the town entirely out of his head. Putting his finger on one side of his nose, according to his habit when he was troubled, he tried to think.

"*Where is Michael Barney?*" The question came with the crack of a torpedo, lifting him partly out of his seat.

"In bed."

"Where in bed?"

"In der poor-house."

"What poor-house?"

"Dot poor-house vere der vas dot idiot who showed me into dot room all around, und den stood like a fool lookin' in at dot door, und——" He had his arm lifted about to illustrate the manner in which he had shied the boot-jack at him.

"Where is the poor-house; what's the name of the town?"

"Oh, der place vere he vas?"

"Yes, yes, yes, yes."

"Oh, der place vere he vas? Let me see." He turned his pockets inside out in his endeavor to find the note which Michael had originally written to himself stating where he could find him. At last he brought it

forth, and held it up, deliberately, trying to make it out. Exasperated beyond all self-control, Cassius snatched it from him and began to read it himself.

"Skunk's Hollow? Is that the place where Barney is?"

"Oh, yes; dot vas him every dimes. Skunk's Hollow. Him vas der feller."

Cassius took down some of Mike's other communications which had been placed in his hand by Waldemar and others, and compared them with the letter. Having convinced himself that the handwriting was the same, he said to Hans,—

"Will you stay here till I return?" His visitor hesitated, but finally answered,—

"Yah."

"I don't suppose you'd object to my locking the door for a few minutes?"

"No, I vill lock it mineself."

Taking no notice of this suggestion, Cassius left the room, and turned the key on the outside.

"Dem lawyers, dey vas strange fellers," repeated Hans, when he found himself a prisoner.

The other hastened to consult with his associate counsel and Waldemar, and soon returned.

"I must request you to remain with me, and we will go together to see this man, if I can secure an adjournment of the case."

To this proposition Hans very readily assented, and since the hour had now arrived for the court to resume its session, he accompanied the lawyer in.

The room was thronged; and as they entered and sat down near the green-covered table, the expectant multi-

tude were talking together in a loud murmur. The reporters had gathered, and while one or two were sharpening their pencils, others were laughing at some amusing circumstance which had happened just before they entered. Several country people, who had driven twenty miles to be present at the final summing up of the case, were cracking peanuts, and firing the shells, with the help of the thumb-nail and forefinger, over on the unsuspecting heads of their acquaintances sitting in the second row in front, and then giggling hysterically when the target turned round and told them to "keep their shucks to themselves."

A spectator chancing to come in might have supposed that it was a gathering of people to decide on the preliminary steps for the celebration of a festival. He surely never would have guessed that on the other side of that oak door there was a human heart waiting wearily for the jailer to come to lead him forth to receive to-day the sentence of life or of death. Presently the door opened and Waldemar entered, accompanied by a guard on either side. He took his place near his counsel, and for a moment the murmur sunk away, and all eyes were turned on the man who was probably so soon to die on the scaffold. The people from out of town stopped eating their peanuts, and craned their necks that they might get a better view of him.

The opening of the proceedings, however, was delayed by the tardiness of one of the judges, so that soon the hum of voices was heard again and the surreptitious merry-making went on as before. When at last the judge came shambling in and resumed his seat, the audience became silent, when the marshal with the staff

in his hand cried out, "Hear ye; hear ye; hear ye;" and the court was opened.

All felt that the important hour had arrived. The final appeal was now to be uttered, and then the verdict to be brought in. Bets had been laid with large odds, by some who had watched the trial from the beginning, that the jury would decide without leaving their seats.

The prosecuting attorney looked confident, and Strabelli, who sat with Mrs. DeCamp, was as self-possessed as though in the parquet of the opera-house waiting for the curtain to be rung up. Mr. and Mrs. Russell could not refrain from appearing troubled, and Katie wore a veil to hide her eyes, which were swollen with weeping. The mother, with her sweet face, was there, and close beside her the father, with a sad, serious countenance, and leaning upon his cane.

"He's a mighty handsome feller to be a murderer," said one man to his companion.

"Yes, he doesn't seem to care much, does he?"

"He cares more'n you think. I tell you he'll die game; he ain't no chicken."

Some of the jury were congratulating themselves that the time of their confinement was almost ended, and were rejoicing in the anticipation of celebrating their freedom with appropriate ceremonies, which meant getting ingloriously drunk. Others were looking forward to the hour of their deliverance with an equal degree of secret bewailment, inasmuch as they had never been able to earn such good wages in their lives before as they had received while thus fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a public capacity.

Finally Cassius arose amid the profoundest silence.

"May it please the court, I desire to move an adjournment of these proceedings until Monday morning. We have just learned of the whereabouts of a witness whose presence is most essential to prove the complete innocence of the prisoner."

Davis was on his feet at once. Waving his hand as though throwing his arguments at the head of the honorable court, he objected to the motion. Abundant time had been given, and he felt assured that this was only a ruse on the part of the defence to annoy the prosecuting attorney, the honorable business men in the jury-box, who had been altogether too long detained from their families and their various callings, the witnesses, who were retained with large expense to the State and great personal inconvenience, and the honorable judges themselves, who, with other cases awaiting them, must now be delayed longer, simply to give the opposing counsel opportunity to dilly-dally and waste the time of all concerned. It was simply, to use a term which had unfortunately become too common in our legislative halls, "filibustering; nothing but filibustering, sir." He therefore opposed most strenuously the proposition of the learned gentleman on the other side for any adjournment, and urged that they proceed without delay.

The friends of the prisoner, who saw in all this a ray of returning hope, leaned forward eagerly, trying to interpret its meaning.

"Who are these witnesses?" asked the judge.

"May it please the court, I have here in my hand a letter from Michael Barney, who for weeks has been sick in another town, and has only just received information of what has happened in our midst. He would have

been present at this date had he been able to leave his bed. As he has unfortunately been incapacitated from coming himself, he has sent a messenger, who has but just now delivered to me this letter, of the genuineness of which there is every proof.

"If this honorable court will consent to the adjournment, we will pledge ourselves to have this witness present by Monday morning, even if he has to be brought in on his sick couch."

There was a whispered consultation among the judges.

"The court's adjourned till Monday morning," said one of them.

The crowd moved toward the door, and the visitors who had driven twenty miles to hear him pronounced guilty, said as they went out, munching their peanuts,—

"Oh, pshaw!"

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### FOUND OUT!

"WHAT is your name?" asked one of the lawyers, when Mike, haggard and weak, was assisted up into the witness-box.

"Michael Barney."

"You have come here of your own accord, Michael?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you come here for?"

"To save an innocent man, your honor."

"Barney, have you had any communication with the

prisoner since the night you left him,—the night in which the murder was committed?"

"No, sir."

"Now remember, you are on your oath. Tell us what you know of the reasons for this unexpected return of Waldemar Grant to Groveland."

Mike, in reply to this and other questions, some of which were interrupted by objections from the opposing counsel, proceeded to detail those facts with which the reader is already acquainted, concerning his following Strabelli out of the bank, of his discoveries at the hotel, of his communicating with Waldemar, and the circumstances under which the despatch was sent. His account accorded with that previously given by the young man, except that it contained much which he had not been able to convey to Waldemar during the brief time they had been together on the day of their meeting.

During the recital, Strabelli sat stroking his moustache, with a cynical smile playing on his lips, and occasionally whispering in a nonchalant way to Mrs. DeCamp.

When Mike had told his story with the straightforward manner of a man who only desires to relate the truth, the lawyer who was questioning him said,—

"Now, Barney, there is one statement of yours which you have not explained. You say you followed Signor Strabelli out of the bank. If you were not in league with the prisoner at that time, what led you to do that?"

"Because I suspected him of bein' a dishonest man."

"You suspected him of being a dishonest man. Why?"

For the first time during the examination of which this is only the briefest synopsis, Mike hesitated; the prosecuting attorney fixed his eyes on him, and a sar-

donic smile rested on the face of Strabelli. It was evidently a pivotal question, and when the witness faltered, there were those who thought that now his testimony would break down. Finally, taking a swallow, and looking uneasily over to where Katie sat, he answered,—

"Because—I knew him—a good many years—ago."

There was an unconscious pathos in his tone, as now for the first time he found himself forced to make reference to the days of his grief.

"How did you know him a good many years ago? Remember, Barney, you're on your oath."

Again he hesitated, but said at last,—

"I knew him when he committed a great crime; but he passed under a different name thin."

"What was his name then?"

"Porta; Antonio Porta."

Strabelli's countenance changed, and his eyes flashed from under his contracted brows; but he was a man of nerve, and though taken thus utterly by surprise, he only leaned forward and peered into the face of the witness. It was not strange that one who had seen him once should fail to recognize now the happy, rollicking Irishman of those old days, when, with his Maggie, and his little Katie by his side, he would not have changed places with any prince who sat clad in purple. His hair had become as white as snow, making him seem many years older than he really was. There were deep lines in his face, and his recent sickness had altered his appearance even more than before. His very voice was changed from the gay hilarity of those days, when the boisterous mirth with which he was accustomed to greet his little family on re-

turning from the store had often shocked that sense of refinement in Maggie which, unless accompanied by a generous nature, is likely to narrow our sympathies, and make us cruelly to wound some of the noblest and most unsuspicious hearts in all the world. His tones were quiet and subdued enough now to have pleased even her, if she had been present; and there could have been for her no greater retribution than to have beheld him now. His hands trembled and his face was pale.

"A drink o' water, plaze." It was handed to him, and he drank.

"What crime did you know him to be guilty of?" Here an objection was offered, but was overruled by the court, because the defence was trying to establish a sufficient motive for his following Strabelli other than being in league with the prisoner.

"Go on, Barney. What crime did you know him to be guilty of?"

"I'd-I-I-I'd rather not tell, your honor."

There was a whispered consultation among the lawyers, and then his questioner said,—

"It will be necessary, in order to substantiate your former statement."

Silence itself could not be more still than the court-room was during the few moments in which they were waiting for Mike's reply. Passing his hand over his forehead and taking another drink of water, he answered in a low voice, but so clear and distinct that it could be heard at the farthest corner of the room,—

"He lured away from me a wife, who was a true and good woman to me until he deceived her an' wrought her ruin; he carried away my choild, an' destroyed the

happiest home there was in all the world;—an' he broke my heart."

There was no revenge in his tone, but that deepest of all sorrow, the sorrow which shrinks from utterance. The lawyer sat quiet for a moment, with his eyes on the witness, and drumming lightly with his pencil on the table in front of him. It seemed as though even he shrank from uncovering that wound.

"Michael, was it any spirit of revenge which led you to pursue him and try to render nugatory his attentions to Miss Russell?"

"Revenge? Lor' bless you, sir, no. I'm gettin' to be an old man now; old before my toime. I shall soon pass away. It wouldn't be becomin' to the loikes o' me now to be thinkin' o' revenge. 'Vengeance is moine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' But Lor' bless you, sir, I couldn't stand by an' see a man that I knowed to be a bad man loike that ruin my own choild, my little Katie, as he ruined her mother more'n twelve year ago."

When he had begun the sentence he did not know how it would close. Unintentionally he had been betrayed into a revelation of the secret which he had thought to have died with him. His voice had sunk quite low now. The lawyers, the very judges on the bench, seemed to forget where they were, and bent forward, every eye fastened on the witness, and every ear strained to catch his slightest word. His interrogator, guessing at the truth, asked,—

"What do you mean by that; is your child present?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is she?"

He hesitated again, casting a half-helpless, pleading

look at the judge; then pointing to Katie, he said, in a stifled tone,—

"Over there, sir."

"Miss Russell?"

"Yes, sir."

There are some scenes which the painter can never delineate; he can only suggest. It would be an audacious hand which should attempt to depict a spectacle like that which was presented when these words were uttered.

Then slowly and hesitatingly, in answer to the questions asked him, he went on to tell how he had vainly searched for her until at last he found her, as the adopted child of Mrs. Russell; of his voluntary sacrifice for her sake; and of how through all the lonely years he had watched over her, though none knew of it save himself; how this had led him to track Strabelli and discover the forgery; and how, when he knew of his coming to the city with Mr. DeCamp, he followed him, because he feared that, having been foiled in his wicked efforts there, he might be led to commit some other crime; of how the constant watching had unsettled his mind; of the coming of Hans, and why it was that he had not appeared sooner to testify in behalf of Wäldemar.

"It's a lie," whispered Strabelli, with an oath, when he had finished. But just then an officer tapped him on the shoulder, and said,—

"I have a warrant for your arrest."

It had become pretty well understood in the court-room who Strabelli was, and when the spectators saw him, with pale face and angry, lowering look, walking out in charge of the officer, they could restrain them-

selves no longer, but broke out in one deafening round of applause, mingled with hisses, which all efforts proved futile to quell, until the door had safely closed behind them.

The time had now come for adjournment, and the crowd dispersed to reassemble in the afternoon; but few, if any, of them guessed the still greater surprise which was awaiting them then.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

WHEN the court assembled in the afternoon Mike was not present. The effort endured in travelling, and the excitement of the morning, had thoroughly exhausted him, and immediately after the morning session he had been conveyed to his cot. Mr. and Mrs. Russell insisted on his being taken to their own house, but he wished to be carried instead to his old lodgings; so they bore him very tenderly up the same stairs which the tired feet of Jane had climbed so often, on whose steps Katie, poor and ragged, had sat and cried over the sale of her bird, and down which she had followed the form of her friend on that morning when all the world seemed to be clad in darkness and the light of life to have gone out. He was very weak, and the doctor said that unless he could have perfect rest and the tenderest nursing, he would not be likely to live long.

Neither was Katie present that afternoon. It was the first time during the trial that she had been absent. Waldemar felt a sinking of the heart when he discovered that her place was not filled, but only for a moment; for his lawyer gave him a letter in her handwriting, telling him to be of good courage, that all would yet be well; that while she longed to be present at his side, she felt it was a small sacrifice which she was making in leaving him that she might take care of Mr. Barney (she could not yet bring herself to call him father), when compared with that sacrifice which all these years he had been making for her; but she bade him put his trust in God, promising that she would not cease to pray that he might be delivered from the hands of all his enemies.

Hans, who had scarcely been able to restrain himself till the conclusion of the examination, and had more than once during the morning come very near being arrested for contempt of court by interrupting the proceedings with his emphatic endorsements of his friend's statements, was very desirous of staying with him also; but the doctor had strictly forbidden it.

"He must have perfect quiet," he had said.

So the disconsolate but happy German was borne away to the mansion of Mr. Russell, where, with no fear of the lawyers before his eyes, and with no further danger of arrest for being over-communicative, he might confirm each one of the statements of Mike, enlarging without let or hindrance from the court on the goodness of his friend. This he continued to do, to the full delight of his listeners, until it came time for them to leave in order to be present at the continuation of the trial.

During the morning Mrs. DeCamp had seen and rec-

ognized him. The circumstances under which she had met him in the hotel in New York had been of a character calculated to impress his image vividly upon her mind.

She had never been a bad woman; her faults were the result of vanity and thoughtlessness rather than of any premeditated evil. And when she saw Hans once more, and by the recital of Mike's story was led to recall that day long ago when the Irishman had pleaded so earnestly in behalf of his friend, she rejoiced to think that she had finally listened to him and granted his request.

She had loved Mr. DeCamp as much as a woman can love whose thoughts are so completely centred on herself; and the revival of the old memories touched a tender spot in her heart, for it recalled the time when he was with her, and had at least appeared to love her, before the bickerings of later years had driven them apart. It sent a shudder through her frame to think of the revelations which had been made concerning Strabelli; to find that at the very time to which he had often referred (for she had been so completely enamoured of him that she remembered even the dates he had mentioned), that at the very time he had represented himself as encountering many heroic adventures in the vicinity of Venice, such as were only to be expected from a count at least, even then he was carrying on an amour with a young Irish woman, the wife of a common grocery keeper.

She hated him; and as she hated him, she sympathized with all the rest who seemed to her to be the victims, equally with herself, of his vile machinations. So she sent around to Mrs. Russell's an invitation for Hans to

take tea at her house, while at the same time she called in person at Mike's apartments to tell him of her conviction of the truthfulness of his testimony.

It was with a good degree of hope that Waldemar's friends took their places near him when the court was called to order. All the circumstantial evidence against him had been, as they thought, destroyed, and there remained now simply a question of veracity between him and Strabelli. Even they, however, were not looking for the revelations about to be made.

"Mr. Boston will please take the stand," said the counsel for the defence.

An elderly gentleman, with a large, round, kind face and a thoughtful eye, took his place in the chair. It was the old friend of Mike's with whom he had consulted previous to sending the despatch to Ireland; one of his former customers, and the one who had expressed such genuine sympathy for him at the time of his troubles.

For a long while Mike had so carefully concealed his whereabouts from his former acquaintances, lest the secret which he zealously cherished should become in some way known and Katie's parentage discovered, that Mr. Boston had long ago supposed that he was dead. One of the first questions asked, however, by Cassius when he met Mike had been if there was any one who could verify his statements in reference to Strabelli. He had referred to him, though he knew nothing of his present place of residence; but Hans, who had recently met him, was able to give his business address in New York City. A despatch was immediately sent urging him to hasten on. He had taken the night train, and

arrived in Grovetown about an hour before the time for his appearing on the stand.

There was some questioning whether his evidence should be listened to, but as one of the strongest points in the argument of the prosecution had been that unless Waldemar and Mike had entered into a conspiracy to rob and murder the deceased there was absolutely no motive for their strange conduct on the night of the crime and prior to it, it was finally admitted as tending to break down that line of attack.

His testimony was given very succinctly, occupying in all only perhaps from fifteen to twenty minutes. One of Waldemar's counsel then arose and said,—

"We have now to introduce a witness who has come to us unexpectedly and of his own accord. He is the one person who can unravel that which remains to be unravelled in connection with this strange case,—a case in which, I think we may say, a man whom we shall prove innocent beyond all peradventure has, by a curious combination of circumstances and the cunning villainy of the actual criminal, come so near being pronounced guilty of a bloody crime.

"The one person who, on that awful night, stood by, and with his own eyes beheld the deed, has until this time persisted in the declaration that the murderer was this young man. When, however, this morning he saw Porta, *alias* Strabelli, pass his cell in company with an officer, and learned of his arrest, his bravado forsook him, and he communicated to us his willingness to turn State's evidence and tell all he knew about the case. John Coffin will now take the stand."

A guard disappeared through the great oaken door,

and presently came in leading a young man of about twenty-five years.

"What is your name?"

"John Coffin."

"Where is your residence?"

"For the last three months my residence has been in Groveland; before that, most anywhere."

"What has been your occupation in Groveland?"

"Night watchman in the First National Bank."

"Who employed you in this capacity?"

"Mr. DeCamp, not long after Michael Barney had left the place vacant."

"How did he come to give you this position?" Here an objection was made that John Coffin could not be expected to interpret the motives of the deceased. The form of the question was therefore changed, that he might speak only of what he actually knew.

"How did you come to get this position?"

"Antonio Porta wrote to me that he had grown quite intimate with Mr. DeCamp, and that if I would enter into a plan which he suggested, he would secure it for me."

"Who is this Antonio Porta?"

"The man who has been known here as Signor Strabelli."

"Where did you first meet him?"

"In the State's prison at Joliet."

"Were you both prisoners there?"

"Yes; he for forgery, and I for burglary."

"Did not Mr. DeCamp require letters of recommendation concerning your character?"

"Yes, sir."

"What letters did you present?"

"Some which were forged by Porta. These purported to come from various business men in the East."

"When he met you first in the prison, what did he say to you?"

"We occupied the same cell. He told me he was one of the most expert forgers in the country; and that because I was a graduate from college, and was supposed to have considerable intelligence, we might work together when we came out and make a pile of money. He said that he had some laid by already in some bank in the East, where he kept it under an assumed name; and that, when we were released, we might concoct together some scheme."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him that as his time expired sooner than mine did, he might be looking around, and if he saw a good opening, let me know when I got out."

"When did you get out?"

"About four months ago; and he three months earlier."

"When did you next meet him?"

"I met him by appointment at the town of Huntington, about ten or twelve weeks since."

"What did he say to you?"

"He said that he had a scheme on hand at present by which he expected to make a lot of money by marrying some girl at the Mountain House, where he was stopping. He said he had got into the good graces of an old woman there, who had introduced him to this girl." (At this point Mrs. DeCamp silently determined that she would move heaven and earth to have him hung.) "He said that he had been seeking her for years, because he knew

something about her that nobody else did; and that the man who should marry her could get a big pile and then skip if he chose."

"What did he say he knew about her?" Objected to, and the question ruled out.

"What did he say of his plan in reference to her?"

"He said that he had never been able to find out her whereabouts until he had got out of the jug,—that is, the prison,—but that he had at last got hold of a clue, which he had worked up and had found her."

"What else did he say?"

"He said that there was a possibility of this scheme falling through, because, while the old woman bit like a porgy,—that was his expression,—the young one wouldn't touch the bait; but that if this should fail, he saw a chance in another direction."

"Go on."

"He then proposed to me that he should work me in at the bank, by means of the influence he had gained over Mr. DeCamp; that I should accept the position of night watchman there, so as to be in with him in case we could agree on a plan to rob the safe. The day before the murder he met me in town under the bridge by appointment, just as the clock was striking twelve. We walked down along the river-bank that we might not attract attention. Then he told me that the game was 'most up; that somebody had got on his track. He then proposed that he should arrange to get Mr. DeCamp down to the bank that night, under some pretext, and that we should compel him to give us the combination of the safe."

"Was that the day of the murder?"

"No; he failed to come, and the next day he met me,

and said he had a better plan; that DeCamp was very despondent because he had lost so much money, and that he thought he could persuade him to undertake the robbery himself. Of course he was not to know that I knew anything about it; but when he had opened the safe, we were to fall upon him, bind and gag him, and then clear out. We had two satchels prepared in which to put the swag,—I mean the money. It went all right until we attempted to gag DeCamp. He resisted and commenced to shout for help. Then Porta struck him. I do not think he intended to kill him; but he did. He took up his satchel and turned to escape while I was filling mine. A moment after, I attempted to leave and saw him wrestling with some person on the ground. I jumped into a buggy which was in waiting around the corner, and drove off with another man who was our confederate."

"Who was he?"

"James Brake; some one whom we met in the prison. We got off, and I divided the swag with him. He escaped, and I was caught."

"Did this man, Waldemar Grant, have any connection with this robbery and murder in any way?"

"No, sir; not in any way."

"That will do."

The cross-examination then took place, in which the prosecuting attorney sought by every means to destroy the force of his testimony, but without success.

The next witness summoned was the keeper of Joliet prison. They had not expected to be able to secure his presence until the following day; but in answer to a despatch, they had received the information that he was

stopping on business at a little town not far from Groveland. They wired him at once, and he arrived just in time to take his place on the stand.

He confirmed all which had been said in reference to the confinement of Porta and Coffin under his care, and stated that the former was one of the most dangerous forgers in the country; that since he had left the prison he had been guilty of such an offence, for which he was already wanted in a neighboring State.

When he had completed his testimony, and the prosecuting attorney had had an opportunity to address the jury, which he did in a very few words, not even once complimenting them on their rare intelligence, Cassius arose and said that his utterances, like the learned counsel for the prosecution, would be very few in number. He felt that to any man capable of receiving truth the evidence was sufficient without any further persuasion on his part. After he had sat down, the judge delivered the charge, and then the jury retired.

There had been a strong expectation on the part of many in the audience that they would have returned their verdict for the defendant without leaving their seats; and when they had disappeared through the great door, all felt there could be no doubt that they would return immediately with the anticipated announcement. When, however, ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour had gone, and there was no sign of their coming, evidences of uneasiness began to manifest themselves. It certainly did not seem possible except to the lawyers, who had had similar experiences with juries before, that they could bring in any verdict save for acquittal.

"They may possibly disagree."

"Possibly; but on what ground?"

"You never can tell; I've known juries to go dead against evidence as clear as this."

Thus the lawyers conversed among themselves; while the spectators laid their wagers on the result and waited impatiently for the coming of the twelve men who held in their hands a human life. An hour passed by; not a man had stirred from the court-room; another hour; another. It was past supper-time; the marshal had lit the lights, and the gas sputtered above the scene, and still none had left but the reporters, and they only long enough to find some one to whom they could intrust their copy to be carried to the office. People had grown weary of talking to one another, or had talked themselves out, and had generally subsided into expectant silence. Some had fallen asleep, including one of the judges; others began looking at their watches, and thinking they would have to go home.

Just as the hand on the old dingy clock, with the paint on its once white face scratched and marred as though it too had experienced a lawsuit and been worsted in the struggle, was creeping on toward the first quarter of another hour, the door opened and a messenger came in hurriedly and whispered to the judge, who spoke to the marshal, who called the court-room to order; and a few moments later the jury walked in.

"Gentlemen of the jury, do you find the prisoner in this case guilty or not guilty?"

For a moment the only sound which could be heard was the old clock ticking against the wall and the gas sputtering from the imperfect jets. Then came the answer from the foreman,—

"Not guilty."

How the court-room rang, while cheer followed cheer! Women stood on the seats waving their handkerchiefs, and men, tossing their hats into the air, shouted as though very Bedlam had been let loose. The judges, sitting back in their chairs, did not even try to restrain the outbursts of wild delight; it would have been indeed impossible.

When the final words had been uttered and the trial declared at an end, the throng pressed about Waldemar, each one seeking to be the first to grasp his hand. They would have borne him upon their shoulders if they could have gained his consent. With the greatest difficulty he was at last able to release himself from them and accompany his lawyer into a side room, that he might be alone with the little circle of his own chosen friends.

At last, when the group had entered and the door had been made secure against intruders, first came the old mother, throwing her arms about his neck, kissing him again and again, while tears of joy coursed down her wrinkled face, and she stood clasped in his strong arms. He tried to speak, but his voice choked, and he only pressed her the more closely to his heart. Then came the old father, and after him Mr. and Mrs. Russell, who had stood beside him all through the dreadful ordeal, and in the face of the world declared him innocent. And then the lawyers, and the judges themselves. They explained to Waldemar why it was that the jury had come so near to a disagreement. The man who had once been threatened with arrest for selling liquor to minors had determined at the very beginning of the trial that this was a plan on the part of the aristocracy to defraud justice, and as he

was one of those fools which are all too plenty in this world, who "never change their mind," chiefly because they have no mind to change, it was only after three hours of threats and bullying that the other eleven could persuade him to alter his vote. Now it was all over, however, and every one seemed very happy, though there was a good deal of crying nevertheless. In the midst of it all there came a rap on the door; and when it was opened, Mrs. DeCamp came in. There were tears streaming down her face also, and she did not stop to rub them off; she forgot all about Lubin and the Lily of the Valley, but just as quick as she could, without even stopping to adjust her hair, she ran up to Waldemar, and, throwing her arms about his neck, cried out,—

"Oh, you dear, good, noble boy! Forgive me for every word of evil I have ever spoken about you; I didn't mean it, you know, and it's all my fault. Don't let us be angry any more. Forgive me, Wally dear; you will forgive me, won't you?"

Then after he had kissed her and assured her that all the past should be forgotten, she turned to his father, and putting her arms about him just as she had about Waldemar, ruthlessly trampling her scented pocket-handkerchief beneath her feet, while she stood on tiptoe to reach up to his neck, she said,—

"And you too! We'll forget everything, won't we, brother? I know I've often been silly and vain, and I think if it hadn't been for me there wouldn't have been that trouble between you and dear George. You'll forgive me too, won't you, brother? I didn't mean really to do any evil, and I've often felt sorry for it, but never had the courage to ask pardon before."

Presently Cassius said,—

"I wonder where that Dutchman is?"

Surely enough, Hans had disappeared immediately at the close of the trial. The mystery was soon explained, however. Another rap at the door was heard, and this time when it was opened who should stand there but Hans himself, beaming all over with delight; and by his side, who else but Katie!

His first thought had been to run and bear the tidings to Mike, and then to bring her back with him.

"Oh, by chiminey, I goes me vild mit joyness!" he exclaimed, dancing up and down on his little fat legs, and even presuming to poke in the ribs one of "dem strange lawyer fellers" who had caused him so much tribulation only a few hours before.

It was the first time for many months that Waldemar had seen Katie to speak with her, except as she had visited him at his jail, and then the prison door had been between them. She had never seemed so beautiful to him as she had on those days when she had come like an angel of light, and, looking through the little window of the iron door, had told him not to be afraid of the result.

Now it was all over; no jailer stood by to remind her that the time was up; he never would have to go back into the lonely darkness of his prison cell again. He needed no longer to protest to her that he was innocent; the whole world knew it now, as she had believed it always. And it seemed as if heaven itself were wrapped up in that moment, when he put his arms about her and kissed again and again the lips of that pure, sweet womanly face which was turned up to his.

"May God repay you for what you've been to me," he whispered.

And looking up into his face, with a smile which seemed to him like the benediction of an angel, she answered,—

"He has repaid me already, Waldemar, in showing me the nobility and courage of the man I love."

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### MIKE.

Of all the hero-worship in this hero-hunting world of ours, there is none like that which prostrates itself at the feet of the secret, silent martyr, when he has been found out. A suspicion always lingers about a public virtue; a suspicion of unreality. It may be very brave, but bravery itself is sometimes only vanity in soldier clothes.

"Colonel Blank has been killed at the front," they said to Wellington. But he only answered, "What business had he larking off there in the midst of needless danger, away from his post? He shall not be mentioned in the despatches."

Such courage is often mere brute ferocity; the nervous exhilaration of the tiger which the best of us carry inside our bosoms. "What will England think of us to-morrow?" was a shrewd battle-cry, as most of us poor sons of Adam are made; but the truly courageous man will care little for what England or the whole world will

think of him to-morrow. To him there is another question more important: "What will I think of myself to-day?" He will trouble himself very little about being "mentioned in the despatches."

Such courage is not a common thing to find; but when it is found, the world worships it all the more perhaps because of its rarity. A Wellington may receive our admiration, but a Christ our adoration.

Poor Mike scarcely knew how to bear the honors which were now heaped upon him. The dramatic circumstances under which his life had been revealed to the world had touched its deepest heart. The leading daily of the town devoted a long editorial to enforcing the sublimity of character, as illustrated in the beauty and fidelity of this unpretending life; and the poet's corner became acquainted with this seemingly most prosaic of all earth's children.

The proprietor of the Dime Museum sent him a note offering to put him on exhibition on one of the most prominent stands between the lightning calculator and the amusing mule, and to pay him a salary only exceeded by the two-headed lady herself.

But the little circle which gathered about Mike cared nothing for all this publicity. They only waited anxiously for the time to come when these events should be forgotten, and they permitted once more to go about their daily work unobserved. Rude people would sometimes point out Waldemar or Katie when they rode or walked together, until they became quite accustomed to the staring eyes of that class of folks who take this world for a circus, in which they are always gazing round for performers. Every day when he passed out he would

catch the words in a stage whisper, "There he is! there he is! That's Grant!"

"Well, Wall, you're becoming quite famous," exclaimed one of his old schoolmates, slapping him on the back as he met him in the street one day.

His answer was the answer of a philosopher:

"Phil, there are a thousand joys in this world more real than to have one's self talked about."

When Mr. Russell found that Mike could not be persuaded to leave his little room in the old tenement, he wanted to refurnish it for him. But to this proposal the honest man was as stout in his remonstrance as he had been to the other. "It was good enough for my choild,—Lor' bless her,—an' for—for her" (and he turned his eyes upward as he spoke), "an' it's good enough for a poor ould Irishman o' the loikes o' me."

So they did not try to persuade him after this, but every day they came to him, and he cared for no greater joy than to lie, looking into Katie's face and holding her hand in his, while Waldemar read aloud. Sometimes it would be poetry or fiction or history, and sometimes the Bible. This last he liked best, because he understood it, and knew how to read it now. He had not always known how to do this. In the days of his darkness he had tried for a long time in vain to get any help from it, and at last was about to give over any further attempt. The few verses which he had been accustomed to read to Katie he loved because of their association, but the rest seemed for the most part like a puzzle, which he could not make out.

"Sure it's all full o' big words, which I can't understand at all at all," he had said years ago, when he was

recovering from his insanity, and had not yet left the asylum. "An' it tells about a wheel bein' widin a wheel; an' the prophet eatin' a big scroll, an' about its bein' sweet in the mouth an' bitter in the belly, an' all that; an' for the loife o' me I don't know what it's all about. Whatever it means, it don't mean me anyhow. I never was a wheel widin a wheel as I knows on; an' I niver eat any scroll nor nothin' o' thim koind. All I know is that I've lost my Katie, an' my poor Maggie's gone, an' I want somebody to tell me, if they can, how I can be a man an' bear it loike a man. But I don't foind it here."

And then the kind-hearted doctor who had gone through those troubles long ago, and settled them forever, had sat down by his side, and turned to one passage after another and read it to him, and after each one had asked,—

"Doesn't that seem to speak to you?"

Then he had told him how the Bible was written for all ages of the world, and for all kinds of people; and parts of it, which had met the wants of one age, would scarcely be needed at all in the next; but there was something in it for every age and for every man.

"It's just like a garden, Mike," he said. "You don't try to eat the whole garden, but you select just that which meets your need at the time you are hungry. Here you cut off a good-sized cabbage, and there a melon; then you go under the tree and gather some apples; perhaps you put into the basket a few beets, and you have all you want. That's the way God intended we should use this garden of His; but a great many people imagine that they must digest the whole

ten-acre lot, earth, trees, rocks, fruit, vegetables, and all. So, instead of finding enough and to spare there for their little needs,—and their great ones too, for the matter of that,—and accepting it in the spirit of love and trust as a gift from the kind Father, they waste all their time in trying to digest the rocks and the trees."

"But what's thim things in the Bible for, thin?" queried Mike.

"For the same reason that the forests and the quarries are in the earth; because they either are, or have been, or will be useful to some one. The rocks and the trees are inspired as much as the vegetables, only the vegetables are more inspired for you, because they meet your need. That is inspired which inspires. Theologians may seek other tests, and they ought to seek for them, because they must be occupied, not only with religion, but the science of religion. But for plain every-day men like you and me, we don't need any other test; that is inspired which inspires."

Then he had taught him to turn to the Psalms of David, and the story of Job, and the words of Jesus; so that, beginning with just that which he could understand, Mike had gradually learned to love almost the whole; until now his Bible had become all dog-eared, and many pages were stained with the marks of falling tears. But he would not let them read it to him all the time, though he loved it better than the other books.

"Read what plazes you, Katie. I once heard a preacher say that there was such a thing as bein' selfish even in bein' good. I suppose that's what Solomon means when he says, 'Be not righteous overmuch.' I don't want to be one o' thim folks that's so good there's

no livin' wid 'em. An' anythin's schwate to me now, darlin', that comes from your lips; whether it's singin' or prayin', or only readin' thim novels." Blessed sunset after a winter's day; the hour had come again when he could call her—darling.

Hans came in beaming and happy whenever he was admitted. That was not very often, for the physician declared that it might be a long time before Mike would recover, and the irrepressible spirits of the German proved too exciting for his strength.

The faithful fellow absolutely refused, however, to go away, scarcely absenting himself long enough to eat his meals; but would lie down on the floor outside the room at night, utterly unconscious of the real annoyance which he sometimes gave by his midnight slumbers, when he seemed to snore in all languages at once. No one had the heart to tell him of it, and so a bed was arranged in the hall-way, where he could be quickly summoned to perform any errand which needed to be done. And he was never happier than at such times, when he felt he was doing a service for his friend.

One day, after several weeks had elapsed, Waldemar came in, as was his daily custom. He tried to appear calm, but the quick eye of Katie, who now watched almost constantly by the side of her father, knew immediately that something unusual had occurred to excite him.

The trial of Porta was now concluded. They had kept carefully from Mike the details, lest he might not be able to bear the nervous strain. It was the startling revelation which had been unearthed which now flushed the cheek of the young man.

"What is it, Waldemar?" she whispered, as Mike lay asleep.

It was a long and strange story which he told her in a low tone. He had almost finished when the physician came in, and Mike was aroused from his slumber.

When he had concluded his call and had passed into the hall, Waldemar, who had followed him, said,—

"Doctor, there have strange things happened, as perhaps you know, and this whole mystery is at last unravelled. We have kept it from Mike during the progress of the trial, as you advised. Once or twice he has asked concerning it, but we have either diverted his attention, or else, if he has persisted, we have promised him that when the right time came we would tell him all; he has submitted passively, and patiently waited. Now it is concluded, and I should like to tell him, if you think he is strong enough to bear it."

"Well, he has slept comfortably, and perhaps it will not hurt him; only keep calm, and do not permit him to become too much excited. Stop if he seems to grow tired."

"Thank you, doctor; good-day."

He returned to the room and sat down by the side of the bed.

"Mike," said he, "or—Mr. Barney."

"No, call me Mike, please."

"Well, then, Mike, the long mystery of your life is explained now, and I can tell you everything you want to know. And though there is much which will make you sad, because it will recall the old times which we have all been trying to lead you to forget, I am sure there is much which will make you very happy."

Then, while Katie sat stroking his head and running her fingers through his silvered locks, the young man began to draw aside the veil which the other had been so eagerly but vainly trying to penetrate through all those dark and weary years.

"Stop," said the old man, when he had begun. "Is Hans there?"

"Yes; Hans is in the hall-way."

"Bring him in, thin; bring him in. We bore the sorrow together, an' I want him to share the joy."

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### STRABELLI.

HANS having been called in, Waldemar began:

"The trial of Strabelli is now finished. As you remember, he was wholly unprepared for his arrest, and being taken, as he was, directly from the court-room (where he had come to see an innocent man convicted of the murder), he had no opportunity of destroying the evidence of his rascality, as he would undoubtedly have done had not circumstances culminated so suddenly.

"By these evidences, found in his trunk, which was traced to his apartments in another city, we have discovered his true motive in so persistently seeking to alienate this dear girl from me. Of course it was not love; we knew that. But the great mystery with us all was, why he should put himself to so much pains to

accomplish that which at the most seemed to be but a passing fancy."

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Mike, impatiently, as Waldemar paused a moment, and he recalled the many sleepless nights he had had trying to solve that very question. Seeing his anxiety, the young man continued:

"In this trunk they found certain papers and letters, and, among them, a copy of a New York daily, stating that if any one knew of the whereabouts of Katie Barney, the daughter of Michael and Margaret Barney, at one time living in Jenkinstown, New Jersey, and would communicate with the firm of Grouse & Hanslow, he should be rewarded.

"We have found that this man Porta, fancying doubtless that the advertisement was inserted by you, wrote under an assumed name to this firm to know what the reward was and what parties were engaged in the search. He stated that he once knew this young woman when she was a girl, but had supposed until seeing the offer of this reward that she had been returned to her father, after the death of her mother.

"In reply he received the information that diligent inquiry had been made in Jenkinstown before any public measures had been taken; and that according to the testimony of his former acquaintances the father had never heard of his child since that time. That he had left the city some years before, and was supposed to be dead, no information ever having reached the place concerning him; and that it was known that he was the subject of mental aberrations."

"This must ha' happened when Hans was in Germany?"

"Yes. They stated that the advertisement was inserted by them at the request of the executors of a certain will, left by the uncle of Mrs. Barney; that this gentleman had died on the continent, but had formerly lived in Ireland, and been the guardian of his niece, until the time when she ran away to marry you. That he had left his whole estate to her daughter, Katie, if she could be found; and if not, it should go to the queen.

"After this they heard nothing more of Porta, and gave up the search as useless. By the terms of the will, however, in case she was not found, no disposition of the property was to be made for ten years, except to see that it was properly invested."

"An' how old was this paper?"

"Oh, not very old; I forget the exact date."

"Go on."

"This man Porta, when he had learned that this estate had been left to Katie, and that you in all probability were dead, determined to track her if she were living, win her affections if possible, and marry her to gain control of her inheritance. With the knowledge which he already possessed, it was not a very difficult matter for him to accomplish the first part of his plan. After a few months' diligent search, he discovered that your daughter had been adopted by Mrs. Russell. He then made his appearance at Troy Mountain. He proceeded deliberately, because he knew the secret of the inheritance was his own, and he firmly believed that the secret of her identity was his own also. This accounts for the leisurely manner in which he went to work, and also for the indiscretions which, in so shrewd a rascal would otherwise have seemed almost impossible."

"Well, well, well!" said Mike, thoughtfully. "Well, well, well!"

"This explains, moreover, what we could not understand when we discussed the matter in this room, on the night of my arrival in Groveland. You remember we wondered how a rogue like this should pursue a game which must have been discovered sooner or later, and which rendered him liable to imprisonment for forgery and for robbing the mails.

"If he could have alienated us two, and have secured Katie for himself long enough for him to have laid hands upon her inheritance, he would have disappeared forever, and the story of his princely life in Italy might perhaps have become a fact; as for her, he would have left her with a broken heart."

"I don't think I should ever break my heart over a man like that," said the young girl. "I knew nothing about him, of course, and so could not reason about the matter, but whenever he came near, *I felt* he was bad, though I never could explain it."

"That's another illustration of the truth of what Herbert Spencer says," replied Waldemar, smiling: "that a woman's intuitions are better than a man's reasons."

"But why was it I niver heard anything from Maggie's uncle, after sindin' him that despatch?" And Mike looked up from his pillow inquiringly.

"Because he had moved away long before, and the despatch never reached him. After his niece had gone the place became unendurably lonely, and so he sold out at a sacrifice and went to live on the continent. They say he was always eccentric, both in his speech and

habits; he seldom remained long in a town, but seemed to be pursued by a spirit of restlessness and remorse for having cast off Katie's mother. Doubtless he thought to make atonement for his heartless conduct by leaving this bequest to her child.

"While you've been lying on your back here we've been communicating with the authorities, and have discovered these facts. Porta himself acknowledges it all now. As he puts it, he's got to swing anyhow, and there's nothing more to be gained by concealment. That's about what he said, leaving out the oath which he put at each end of the sentence.

"At first he was inclined to deny everything; and even when these facts had been established he persisted in disallowing the identity of Katie, declaring that the child whom he knew was drowned at sea with her mother; that he had never been in Belleville, and that the story of his having been there was a fabrication.

"This statement was proved false, however, first by his letter to Grouse & Hanslow, and secondly by testimony coming from an unlooked-for source. A woman by the name of Bridget Barney, who then lived a few miles from here, at a place called Jenkinstown, in this State, but who is now keeping a laundry in this city, testified that she received a despatch from Porta years ago, telling her husband to come and take care of his child.

"It seems it was intended for you, but went to the wrong town. The despatch was not signed by his name, but she came up to Belleville, and almost by chance, as it were, obtained the original blank on which the message was written. Her testimony was very amusing; she seems still to cherish a deadly hatred against some

Chicago reporter, who represented her as wringing out her husband and then hanging him over the clothes-horse to dry. The fact was quite an episode in her uneventful life, so that she kept the blank among her precious treasures as the text for a strange story among her friends. When this despatch was compared with his own handwriting, it settled the matter beyond dispute. She volunteered her testimony, having heard the case talked of among her washerwomen, and recognizing the names of the parties."

"But what had all this to do with the murder of Mr. DeCamp?"

"That has all been explained by the testimony of his accomplice who turned State's evidence. You remember, when you sent word to me, you wrote first to Mannheim. You followed the direction on Katie's letter, and she had been misled by my pretended correspondence which he had forged. As we conjectured, he had arranged that all letters sent to me at that place be returned to him. It was in this way he kept me from receiving Katie's correspondence; her letters to me came back to him, and likewise yours. Then he knew he was being watched, and accordingly gave up that plan for another. Who was watching him he could not tell, because of the assumed name under which you wrote. Your second letter, being sent to Heidelberg, I of course received; and that brought me home, unexpectedly to him. It was at this time he entered into league with Coffin to rob Mr. DeCamp, having placed him, by his influence, in the position of watchman, made vacant by your leaving. The rest we know; his victim showed fight, and he struck him. Perhaps he did not intend to kill him,

and perhaps he did; probably the blow was harder than he meant it should be."

"An' Porta?"

"Found guilty of murder in the first degree, and to-morrow he's to be sentenced."

Mike looked up at Katie, and tears of gratitude sprang to his eyes as he thought of what she had escaped. She bent over and kissed him, and he put his arm about her neck, holding her close to him. His breath came hot against her cheek. Then he said, as he unfastened his arms, and she sat where he might look into her face, and feel her hand upon his brow,—

"I've lived for you, my darlin'. The Lord knows how I've lived for you. I've dreamed of you by night, an' I've thought of you by day. Away back in thim past years whin I didn't know where you was, only that you was somewhere, an' perhaps cold an' hungry; perhaps lyin' awake o' noights, an' cryin' for me, as my lonely heart was cryin' for you; an' in thim days I just had one prayer on my lips, an' that was, O Lord, let me see her once more, an' know that she isn't weepin' her loife away in darkness an' sorrow. I'll niver ask any other blessin' if ye grant me this.

"An' He did grant it; an' I was so happy watchin' your schwate face, whin you didn't know it at all at all. Many's the toime I've sat in this little room listenin' for the tread o' your footfall on the stair. Oh, how I longed to put these old arms about ye, an' take your dilicate fingers in this big ugly hand o' moine, an' tell you the whole story; an' how I'd been hungerin' for your broight smile all these years! But I didn't do it, did I, darlin'? I stood it to the end, didn't I?" His

voice became more earnest, and he gazed up at her eagerly.

Waldemar noticed in his eye that confused look which one who has seen a patient laboring under partial derangement can never forget.

"Hush, Mike, hush," he said, gently seeking to draw the young girl away. "You are growing nervous and tired; we will not talk any more about it now."

"Oh, no, no, no; I'm not nervous!" he answered. "I'll be very quiet; I will indeed! Don't stop me; I've held it all these years, an' I must say it. I didn't do it, did I, darlin'? Oh, how I prayed for strength in thim days! An' He give it to me. It was a hard foight, but I won; didn't I, darlin'?"

"Yes, father, yes. And He brought it all out for the best."

"All for the best! all for the best!" he echoed, slowly and thoughtfully.

"But you ought to have let me know, and not have suffered in silence as you did. Now you must be calm, father. You know we all love you, and want to see you get well and strong again."

"The Lord's will be done, darlin', either way," he murmured, with greater calmness. "Ah, I would have fought for loife loike a tiger for her whelps once. It was whin I was seekin' you, an' whin I found you. An' after that I didn't want to go until ye knew me. I didn't think it would ever come about, least of all in the way it has; but every desire of my heart has been granted. He's let me live to see you, an' to see you happy an' to feel the pressure o' your lips upon moine, and to hear ye call me—father. The work o' the old man is done

now, an' in the good Lord's toime I'm ready to go; I'm ready to go."

"But you mustn't talk that way; you are to become well again. Let me fix the pillow about your head. That's right; isn't there something else we can do for you, father?" She dwelt upon the word, because she saw it gave him so much joy. He hesitated a moment, and then replied, with a smile,—

"Yes, there is somethin' you can do for me, darlin'."

"What is it, father? Anything you want; speak of it, and you shall have it."

"It's the only thing now in all the world that I do want. It's the last sacret prayer that I bin offerin' all to myself these many weeks. An' if I don't see it soon, I'm afraid I won't see it all at all; for nobody knows whin this crazy fit may come upon me, an' I don't believe I can stand more than one." He stopped and looked earnestly, first into Waldemar's face and then into hers. "Before I go away I want to see you two one. I want to know that whin I'm laid under the ground, there's another heart that's yours forever, an' a heart that's worthy of you."

And in a low voice she answered, as, blushingly, she bent over Mike, while Waldemar with a smile looked on,—

"It's all arranged, father."

"For whin, child?"

"In less than three weeks, if you are well enough."

"An' where?"

"Here, in this little room."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH THE BELL RINGS, AND, WHILE THE ORCHESTRA PLAYS THE WEDDING-MARCH, THE CURTAIN BEGINS TO DESCEND.

WHAT a wedding that was, to be sure! Unlike, I'll be bound, any other wedding that ever happened since Adam set the fashion of love-making in Eden. True, Mrs. DeCamp was horrified beyond measure at the thought of their not being married in church, or at least, as she expressed it, "somewhere else besides in a miserable tenement-house. Not even a room for guests to touch up their hair in before the ceremony! She was glad she wasn't out of mourning, so that she couldn't go. Why, it was just too awful for anything."

In this she was mistaken, however, for there was a room; even that same which belonged to Sandy and Peggy, who were now old and quite infirm, but had been rendered independent of shoe-making for the rest of their lives by Mr. and Mrs. Russell. Of course they could not have the old worn-out carpet on the floor when there was such a festival on hand; that would never do. And so Mrs. Russell succeeded in accomplishing what she had long sought in vain: the gaining of Peggy's consent to have the old rag-carpet removed and a bright, new three-ply laid in its stead.

Then, of course, it would never do on such an occasion to have the old furniture; so again she scored another victory, after having suffered many a defeat in the past;

and the old traps, which themselves had grown quite as infirm as their owners, were, with a few precious exceptions, converted into kindling-wood, and their places filled with the cosiest, downiest, cheeriest furniture that Groveland could provide.

"'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,'" said Sandy, when he saw the transformation.

But Peggy, who was not so spiritually minded in her aspirations and took a deeper practical interest in the substantial comforts of this mundane sphere, remarked that so far as she was concerned this was the very time when she didn't want to depart, and she would be very much obliged if that event could be delayed for a number of years.

Sandy, though he was somewhat shocked at her manner of speech, calmed his feelings with a hymn, and thought that he was the veriest blessedest man in all the world.

"Now, Mike," they had said, "you must consent to have your room fixed up, too; Peggy has." But he only answered,—

"If you knew how every spot in the paper on the wall is precious to me because it looked down on her in thim days of her sorrow, an' how every crack in the ould ceilin' is dear because her prayers wint up through it to His throne, you wouldn't think I could have it touched."

So they left it undisturbed; the paper, the ceiling, and most of the furniture, just as it was in the old times when Katie used to sit in her little rocker, and her bird in her lap, with Jane sewing at the machine. Even the little chair Mike had found long ago, in the shop where it had been pawned, and bought it back again.

There it was, in that same room, on a bright sunshiny

morning, that the wedding took place. There were Peggy and Sandy, bubbling over with delight.

"Who'd ha' thought it, Sandy?" she cried, clapping her hands together, and then picking up one corner of her apron to wipe the tears from her beaming eyes,—"who'd ha' thought it, on that Sunday morning so long ago, when I started out to find the fine lady, an' tell her of her poor starvin' scholar, that it would ha' come to this! La sakes alive, who'd ha' thought it!"

And there were Mr. and Mrs. Russell superintending everything, and yet never appearing to superintend anything; quiet and strong.

And there was Hans, exclaiming, as of old,—

"Oh, my graciousness! I nefer felt such joyness in all mine lifes before already."

And there was Mike. For the first time in many weeks the doctor had given him permission to sit up. So they sent and purchased an invalid's chair, the most comfortable in all the store; and after Hans and Waldemar had helped him to dress in his spick and span new suit, which had just been brought home, and assisted him into his high collar, which caused him all the morning long to feel as though he belonged to the stiff-necked generation, they wheeled him up to the window by the side of which Katie had sat on that very day when she saw the white horses drive up to the house, long ago.

Then, while the door was crowded by the guests, peering in and standing on tiptoe to look over one another's shoulders, the voice of the preacher was heard, pronouncing one these two souls whom God had joined together for eternity, and whom, by strange paths, He had been leading up to this hour by a way that they knew not of.

After this, the dinner and the merry-making in Peggy's room. A caterer had been engaged, and the tables were spread and everything was ready by the time the ceremony was over. The room was small, but that was all the better, for there were not many of them to sit down, and it seemed just so much the cosier. Mike was wheeled in and given the place of honor at the head of the table. At his left sat the clergyman, Mr. Everett, and at his right, Katie and Waldemar.

Surely no wedding-party was ever merrier, and every one who was present at this one remarked afterward what a stupid affair, in comparison, was the large gathering given in the evening at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Russell. Mike felt more like his old self than he had for years, and the Irish wit of those early days bubbled out constantly over his high collar, until the whole company laughed, not only with him, but at him, on account of his odd remarks at his own appearance in his "store clothes."

Nor was Hans very much behind in this latter respect. One lady declared it was the merriest party she had ever attended, and that she did not know, after all, but that simplicity in these things was the most sensible.

"Yes," responded Mrs. Russell, who sat beside her, "in this thing, and in everything. The true life is the real life; the life by which we derive gladness and hope from the commonplace duties and simple joys of daily being."

"True," exclaimed Mr. Everett, who had heard the remark. "As the good book says, 'God is not only the God of the mountains, but the God of the valleys.' There's no sphere so humble but that we may find His light and love there, and therefore peace and rest, if we

look for it; and there is no sphere where we cannot prove ourselves heroes by shouldering our burden and carrying it manfully, if we will,—as Mike has, and as Katie has, and Jane."

"And Waldemar," suggested Katie.

"And there's no place in life where selfishness does not become a curse," added Mr. Russell. "Whether it be the selfishness of the employer who looks upon his men as so many machines, forgetting that his very relation of superiority makes him that man's keeper, and that for his influence over him, whether for good or bad, he must give an account, not only in the next world, but sooner or later in this; or the selfishness of the employé who only feels his wrongs, and, not stopping to reason about them, destroys the very means of his livelihood by meeting brute indifference with brute ferocity."

"True again," exclaimed the clergyman. "And it is no change of institutions alone which will better society. The only way to reform this world is for each man to begin by reforming himself. The change must be in us. We must be brave enough to advocate and practise the law of love for the law of selfishness."

"In the shop among the employés," remarked Mr. Russell.

"And in the kitchen with the cook," suggested Mrs. Russell.

"And in the nursery with the children," said Katie, with a far-away look in her eyes, as though she were recalling her own experiences in the tavern at Belleville.

"And it is the sheerest nonsense," resumed Mr. Russell again, "for men to say they cannot carry on business successfully except as they start with the conception

of crushing all those beneath them,—looking upon their employés as enemies to be beaten in fight, instead of friends to be sought in co-operation."

"You have never had a strike in your works, have you?" inquired Waldemar.

"Yes, but not often; and I have put down my men's wages as low as anybody when it has seemed necessary; but by intentional kindness (and I take little credit for it, for it was actuated by policy, as well as principle) I have so won the confidence of my workingmen that they trust me. And while I do not hesitate to put their wages down when times require, they know that I will be just as ready to put them up when times permit; and that without waiting for a committee to come to me and demand it, either. And in actual results I would rather have the work of three such men, who are bound to me by the ties of friendship and serve me willingly and with a cheerful spirit, than of five who were filled with dull fire of antagonism. I say it is not only right, it is economical in the end. If men would do this, though they may not think so, they would not only be the saviors of society, but of themselves. The men who do it not, they are the wreckers of society and of themselves."

"That's a good distinction," said Mr. Everett. "Every one of us must belong to one of those classes; the world's saviors, or its wreckers. And its wreckers are——"

"Who?" asked Waldemar.

"Well, the intentionally vicious."

"Porta, for example?"

"Yes. And the systematically tyrannical."

Every one thought of DeCamp, though no one spoke his name.

"And the thoughtlessly frivolous," exclaimed Waldemar, as he silently remembered how one woman's silly vanity had helped on the great catastrophe in her own home, and almost destroyed his.

"An' one other class," said Mike, while he looked at Katie with an expression of pity and love and gratitude combined. "The people who, loike Mrs. Felix, will take a tender, helpless little lamb of a choild, an' try to make it good by tellin' it lies, an' let all the ugly devilish feelin's in their heart be poured out on that helpless innocent head, because the arm isn't strong enough to strike back. I believe they're worse nor all the rest, for they're cowards into the bargain."

And Hans, always eager for an opportunity to endorse his friend, exclaimed,—

"Dot vas so mitout no mistake. Dem vas der wreckers."

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE LAST.

AND now, reader, you and I have reached the parting of the ways. The time has come for us to bid adieu, and then pass on, each in his own path, to meet, perhaps, stranger things in this strange world of ours than any of which we have been dreaming.

"Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing;
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;
So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak one another;
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence."

It remains for me to trace a little farther the lives of these whom we have learned to know, and then arise from my task, with a sigh of relief and yet of sadness that it is all over.

When the time came for the execution of Porta, he walked out to the scaffold, the only man in all the throng who was unmoved. His arms were pinioned behind him, and he was perhaps a little pale; otherwise, it would have been difficult to have distinguished him from the sheriff who walked by his side. In his mouth he held a lighted cigar, which he kept on smoking while the prayer of the clergyman was being offered, spitting it out from between his teeth just in time to answer with an oath the solemn Amen, and receive over his head the black cap which should shut him out forever from a world into which he had introduced so much of sorrow and of sin. He died as men generally die, as he had lived.

Mrs. DeCamp, carefully consulting the fashion-plates and her dressmaker, that she might not cease too soon from mourning the death of her companion, passed gracefully, and by proper degrees, from sombre black into a white border, very narrow and delicate, and at first scarcely perceptible at all.

For one whole year she utterly refused to be comforted, —longer than that, in fact, for when he died it was the eleventh of September, and she remained inconsolable until the thirteenth, thus throwing in two extra days, as it were, for good measure.

Soon after this she was fluttering as gayly as ever about the watering-places in summer, her chief concern being that the wrinkles were becoming so deep that even

Lubin could no longer befriend her. Thus she went down to a giggling, simpering, peevish decay, an unhappy, disappointed woman, with all the weakness of many years upon her, but with none of that dignity and repose which so often make old age sublime.

Hans is living in Jenkinstown with his Katrine, happy and jolly as ever, and loved of all. Once every year, on the anniversary of the wedding-day, he returns to visit Mike, and as they sit and smoke their pipes together he declares that each time "vas better as it never vas before."

The old firm of Edwin Russell & Co. has been enlarged by the addition of a new partner, and Waldemar Grant seeks to carry into his work the same spirit of good-will to all which has been the leading principle of the house ever since its founders started, as poor men, to build up a fortune. He and Katie live in a tasteful and cosey home, just a few doors from the family mansion, where they can see the old folks every day. Each evening she looks for his coming, and seeks to make her marriage what marriage ever ought to be, an eternal courtship. To him there is no place so delightful as his fireside; no gayety in all the world has half the allurement for him as have those cosey, quiet evenings when he and she sit together in the little sitting-room, reading, or singing, or sometimes talking of the old days, or planning for the new. More than once she has said, with a smile,—

"I think your wish has fallen true, Waldemar; the waters must have rolled the angles all away. I wonder if ever married folks were as happy as we before?"

More than once he has answered,—

"And you have realized your dream. You have come through the storm and the darkness, but you've reached the light at last." And so she has, and every day seems brighter than the day which went before.

And Mike; what of Mike? At first he would not think of moving out of the old place, even after the marriage.

"It's good enough for the loikes o' me," he would answer, when they pressed him to come and live with them; "I niver could feel at home at all at all in your grand house, unless I come as the coachman. What was good enough for my little darlin' in the days of her poverty is good enough for me, an' the Lord be praised for it."

But when Christmas came they insisted that he and Peggy and Sandy should hang up their stockings, to see what Santa Claus would bring during the night. They had a merry time of it that Christmas Eve; Waldemar pretending to reason with Mike that his stocking was too big to be filled with anything smaller than a house, and vainly persuading him to borrow one of Peggy's in its stead; Peggy putting up her hands before her eyes and saying, "Oh, for shame, Mr. Grant!" and Sandy looking on and enjoying it all.

But when the next morning came, they found that Waldemar was more than half right after all; for in his stocking Mike discovered not exactly a house, but the deed of a house, as neat and pretty a little cottage as there was in the whole city of Groveland; all thoroughly furnished from cellar to garret, and with his own name on the door-plate. It was not far from Waldemar's; not more than two blocks distant, on a modest

side street, where he would be likely to feel most at home; they could even look into one another's back windows from the third story.

And there was a nice room reserved for the two old people; and Santa Claus brought to them some fresh new Government bonds, so that thereafter they need not be dependent on anybody, but could afford to live as they chose in their humble way, and occasionally go out riding together in a hired carriage, which they enjoyed far more than Waldemar's stylish equipage, in which, somehow, they never could feel exactly at home. They all dined together in the new house on that day, Mr. and Mrs. Russell among them; and such a Christmas dinner!

Nor was that all. It really seemed as though surprises would never cease. Katie had been in correspondence with Hans, and when the bell rang for dinner who should walk in, and take his seat at the table, but the fat little German himself; and when the things came to be served, who should come in to serve them but Widow Carey's Biddy, whom Mike had trotted on his knee long years before. She had since married, and become a widow herself, and now on Hans' recommendation was introduced as cook and general housekeeper into the new home. When she saw her old friend, whom she should never have recognized, though she remembered him well, she was as happy as the rest; and to this day continues faithful and full of gratitude, taking as much pride in the house as though it belonged to her very self.

Since then the years have passed, and Mike is indeed an old man now. Sometimes of a winter's evening, as

he sits in his arm-chair, watching the fire while it burns and crackles in the grate, he holds in his arms a little girl, who looks up into his face and calls him grandpa. And when the chimney whistles drearily, as it did on that night so long ago, and the whirling snow beats against the window-pane, and he hears the wind soughing and moaning in the streets of the great city, she does not know why it is that he presses her so closely, and calls her so tenderly his "little Katie." She only looks with those large, questioning eyes into his, and then laying her head, with its curling golden hair, upon his arm, nestling trustfully in his bosom, she falls asleep and dreams; and the old man looking into the fire is dreaming too. Let us not disturb him; we shall each have our dreams as he has now, if we live long enough.

And out in the storm the old world moves on just the same; and men's hearts are breaking, and children are weeping; and the night looks down on many a tempest-tossed wanderer, lifting her hands above the wreck and moaning for help as she feels the ship sinking beneath her feet; and moaning in vain.

God help us all to deal tenderly with one another while we may. Soon we shall lie down together in the dust, and it will all be over; the story told; the book ended.

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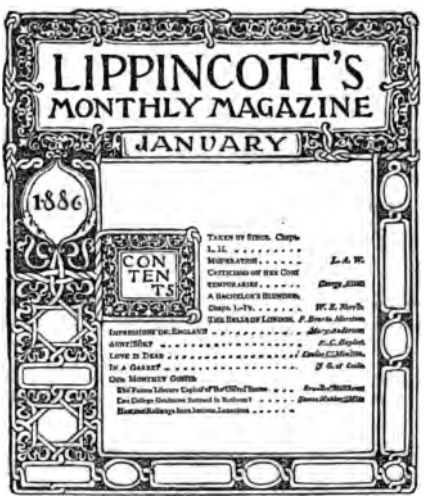


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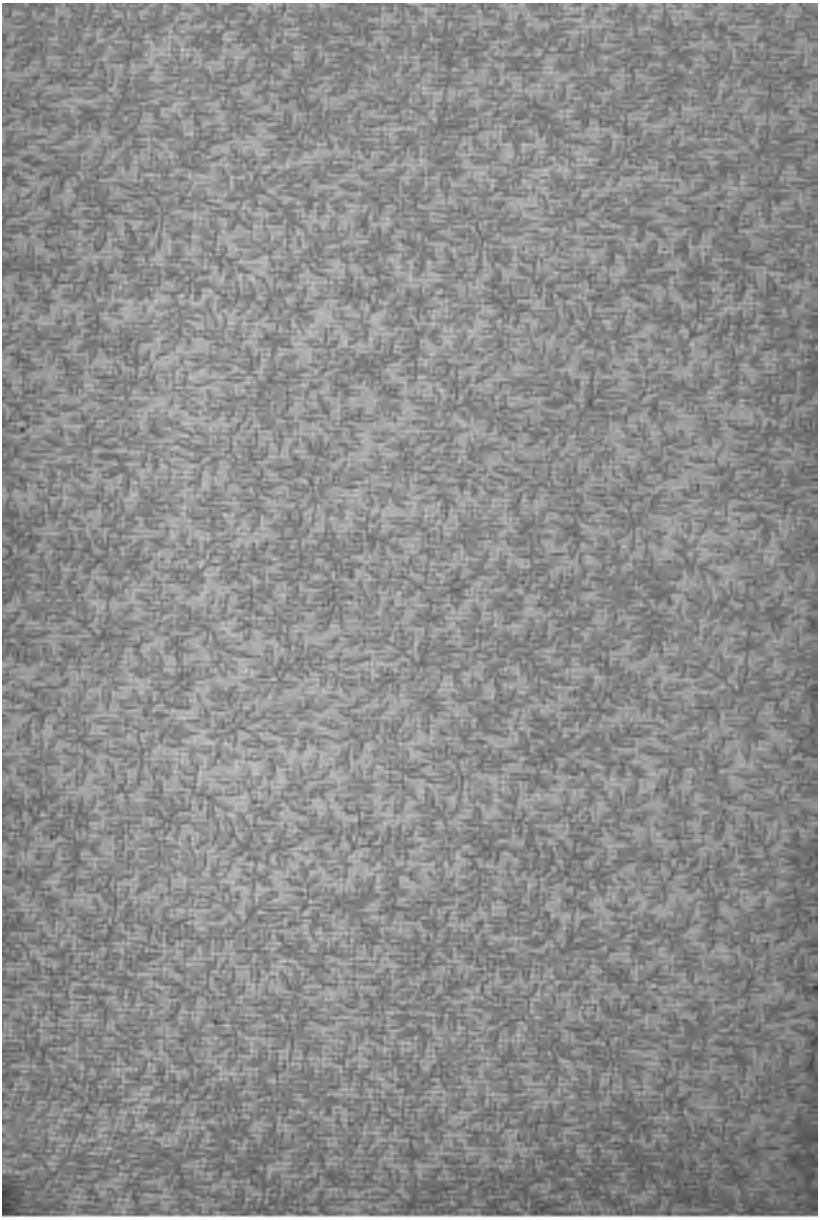

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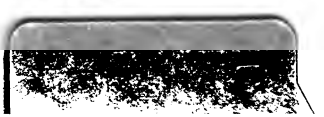

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